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US claims success as Iraq is hit by heavy new wave of air strikes

BRITAIN AND the United States launched a second wave of air strikes at Iraq last night, mounting devastating raids around the centre of Baghdad.

The city was rocked by 13 explosions shortly after 10pm local time (7pm GMT) as the first wave of attacks targeted the central district.

Anti-aircraft fire, this time more sustained and more intense than Wednesday's opening salvo, lit up the sky for approximately 15 minutes. Witnesses reported three huge plumes of smoke, glowing orange, from the city centre.

One building close to the Al Rashid international hotel - where many Western journalists are based - was said to have been badly damaged during the strike.

Britain played a more prominent role in last night's raids than in any assaults since the

BY PATRICK COCKBURN in Baghdad
ANDREW MARSHALL in Washington
AND ANDREW GRICE in London

Cohen, the US Defense Secretary.

The US launched attacks on 50 targets across Iraq, including air defence and airfields, command, control and communications, and sites where United Nations inspectors suspect material for weapons of mass destruction was being hidden. But they are also believed to have hit the most important military and security props of the regime. The headquarters of Iraqi military intelligence in Baghdad were destroyed, as were several barracks belonging to the Special Republican Guard on the outskirts of the city.

"Among the government buildings, they attacked the security police... They bombarded also the military intelligence services headquarters," Iraq's Foreign Minister, Mohammed Saeed Sahaf, told a news conference in Baghdad.

He said there had been civilian casualties. "There is collateral damage in several sites and there are heavy casualties among civilians not only in Baghdad but in other places." One Baghdad hospital alone reported five dead and 30 wounded.

Last night, American B-52s, British Tornados and US Navy aircraft returned to the skies over Iraq, following bomb damage assessment from the first strikes. All the British aircraft returned safely to their base in Kuwait.

"Tornado GR1s are now in action in attacks in Iraq, but I can tell you that all the Tornados involved in the first wave have returned safely to base while others continue to be involved in other attacks," said Air Marshal Sir John Day.

Tony Blair's official spokesman said the Tornados had taken off not long before the Prime Minister's Commons statement at 3.30pm yesterday. They attacked unspecified Iraq and Baghdad itself later in the day.

Mr Blair warned last night that Britain and the US would launch further military strikes if President Saddam rebuilt his capacity to make chemical and biological weapons after the current wave of attacks. "Saddam should have no doubt



Baghdad citizens stand on the debris of a house which was destroyed by a rocket as they watch workers repair a water pipe yesterday

Reinhard Krause/Reuters

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92 Gulf War. But the strikes have triggered fierce criticism of President Bill Clinton in the US, caused unease on the left of the Labour Party and have angered both Russia and China, permanent members of the Security Council.

Neither Washington nor London showed any sign of backing away from the strikes, saying that they would continue until all the targets had been destroyed.

The preliminary assessment from the Pentagon and the Ministry of Defence was that the first wave, on Wednesday night, had been successful. "Substantial damage was done to a number of targets," said William

of our continuing resolve," he said.

Both British and American officials have said that future efforts to control President Saddam will involve bombing raids rather than sending UN inspectors back to Iraq. "We have the surveillance to know what is going on," said one British source.

Mr Clinton has come under fierce criticism for the timing of the strikes from congressional Republicans, coming as they did on the eve of an impeachment debate that could end in

his removal from power. Yesterday, Congress sought to find a new time for the debate, which was postponed, but there was no agreement between Democrats and Republicans on a suitable time.

"It's not true," said the President, when asked whether the attacks had been intended to draw fire from his political predicament.

"What I did was the right thing for the country. I don't think any serious person would believe that any president would do such a thing."

"We're going to complete this mission. And the Republican leaders will have to decide how to do their job. That's not for me to comment on."

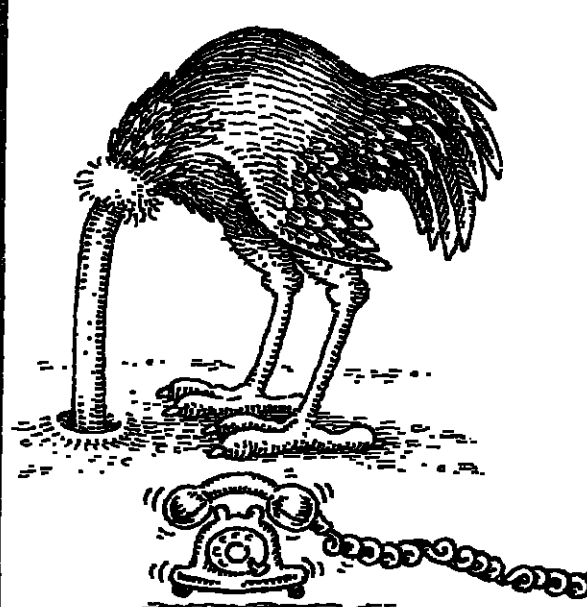
Mr Blair strongly defended President Clinton, insisting that the military action had nothing to do with the moves to impeach him. He told the Commons: "There are suggestions that the timing of military action is somehow linked to the internal affairs of the United States. I refute this entirely."

The Prime Minister won the backing of the Tories, Liberal

Democrats and most Labour MPs after he told the Commons: "This is not directed at the Iraqi people; it is directed at the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein." He said President Saddam was "blind to reason," and "a man to whom a last chance to do right is just a further opportunity to do wrong."

Several Labour MPs expressed their disquiet at Britain's involvement. Tony Benn said the strikes were "a flagrant breach of the UN charter and deeply immoral".

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'A huge explosion shook our house'

"I HEARD a loud explosion which shook my house and we were all afraid," said Ali Jouda, a 16-year-old schoolboy, peering into a 10ft-deep crater made by a cruise missile in Karada street in central Baghdad.

The missile struck at about 1am, demolishing two houses and injuring 30 people. The blast stripped the leaves off a tree and the hot shrapnel was still stuck in its bark.

After the first night of attacks, the mood in Baghdad was stoic but edgy.

Hearing Ali Jouda speak, Raad Ibrahim, a student, contradicted him, saying: "I was not afraid. We're used to it. All the people were on the rooftops

BY PATRICK COCKBURN in Baghdad

looking at the missiles strike." Ali Jouda showed a chunk of aluminium which had come from the missile.

Meanwhile repairs were going ahead fast. A mechanical digger was scooping up debris and pumps were reducing the level of water in the crater.

Most of the strikes yesterday morning were beyond the outer suburbs - unlike in 1991, when power stations were hit in the first hours of the Gulf War.

But there were civilian casualties. In the Yarmuk Hospital, Dr Dhina Kanan, the head of surgery, said: "We

received 10 civilian dead on arrival, as well as 30 wounded, of whom four have since died."

One of the injured was Hamid Mohsin, 30, his face badly burned by an explosion. Scorched hands stuck out from under the bedclothes, covered in ointment. "He may lose both of them," said Dr Kanan.

Baghdad was outwardly calm yesterday. Few soldiers were on the streets. Shops were open and traffic was heavy. But there were also signs of apprehension. Queues of cars outside petrol stations were long.

There was little information on military casualties. But outside the Yarmuk Hospital, a

lieutenant in uniform wept as he stood beside a taxi with two coffins lashed to the roof. The dead men were soldiers and the coffins were draped in the Iraqi flag.

Among the targets hit was the home of Haila, Saddam Hussein's youngest daughter, though she had moved out several days ago.

Mohammed Said al-Sahar, Iraq's Foreign Minister, confirmed that the headquarters of both the military intelligence service and the security services had been hit, along with many industrial enterprises. Baghdad Radio said President Saddam had toured damaged buildings early in the morning.

Iraq's anti-aircraft fire was not as spectacular as in the Gulf War. This may be because Iraq is short of ammunition and is saving it for low-flying aircraft. Iraqi television went off the air during the attack, but returned yesterday evening. This is important for the government as Iraqis get most of their news from TV.

If the government is surprised by what is happening, it is not showing it. "It's all to do with Monica [Lewinsky]," one official told *The Independent*.

Asked how the crisis would end, he said: "It is all in the hands of two men" - presumably President Clinton and President Saddam.

A sign of the ambivalent mood in the Iraqi capital was that last night, as air-raid sirens were sounding, there were wedding parties in the streets outside the al-Rasheed Hotel, banging drums and sounding trumpets.

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RAF Tornados spearhead second phase of Desert Fox campaign

THE AIR ASSAULT

BY JOHN DAVISON
ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington
AND ANDREW BUNCOMBE

IT WAS shortly after 15.00 GMT yesterday that the pink afterburners of RAF Tornados could be seen streaking off into the Kuwaiti evening sky.

Within two hours the pilots had landed safely back at the Al Al Salem airbase, north of Kuwait City and just 35 miles from the border with Iraq, and clambered from their cockpits into the cool desert air. Their mission, or at least the first part of it, had been completed.

It is a task that will certainly continue. Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said yesterday that the British aircraft would carry out 30 per cent of the planned bombing missions of an operation estimated to last two or three days.

The British jets had launched the second wave of attacks, under Operation Desert Fox, on the Iraqi capital Baghdad. They were quickly followed into the air by American B52 bombers which took off from the British island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

Though it was not clear whether the attacks had succeeded in hitting their planned targets or how many civilians may have been killed, Air Marshall John Day, deputy chief of the Defence Staff and director of operations, said yesterday evening that he expected the mood amongst the British air crew to be euphoric.

"There is a very serious job to be done and many sorties still to be flown. So there will be a mixture of euphoria together with a rightful professionalism and concern for what is still to be done," he said. "This is not a simple operation."

The launch of the two-man British Tornado GR1 fighter bombers followed a day of assessment yesterday by senior military commanders of the success of Wednesday night's attack by sea-based American missiles.

"I've seen some of the (reconnaissance) photos this morning and some of the targets that we have looked at appear to be severely damaged," William Cohen, the US Secretary of Defense, said.

This assessment would have been made using pictures from military satellites and U2 spy planes, and from listening to transmissions coming from Iraqi command centres.

Six Tornado reconnaissance aircraft, based in Saudi Arabia, could also have been used yesterday to help in the assessment of the initial attack, in which 50 sites were targeted with around 200 cruise missiles.

There were reports, however, that some of the cruise missiles had struck civilian properties, perhaps because they were diverted by Iraqi anti-aircraft fire that had been unleashed in an effort to shoot them down.

The priority targets from Wednesday would have been Iraq's Russian-designed air defence system. Observers said these needed to be taken out first to establish air supremacy. After that, aircraft would be able to attempt further attacks with the minimum of losses.

The facilities in the air defence system would include command and control bunkers, radar installations, airfields and anti-aircraft missile sites. Only after these have been neutralised would aircraft be sent in on the other targets.

Further protection to the bombers would be given by the use of US electronic jamming aircraft, whose role is to disorientate any remaining air defence systems. In theory, the aircraft should expect only limited retaliation.

The Tornados, all from 12 Squadron based at Lossiemouth, in Scotland, had designated their own targets but would have flown in the same "packages" with US aircraft.

No Iraqi aircraft had posed any threat during the first phase of operations, said Air Marshall Day.

He said they would would have operated at medium height, above 15,000ft, to avoid low-level anti-aircraft fire from the ground.

Medium level flying means the bombs drop at an 85-90 degree angle so they can penetrate further than drops from low level, when they land virtually flat.

It is unclear how many of the Tornados took part in yesterday's missions. But the Ministry of Defence said that about eight Tornados usually fly together and work in pairs.

The Tornados are armed with Paveway laser-guided bombs, weighing 1,000 to 2,000lbs, which in theory find their way to their target by homing in on a laser signal which has been used to "illuminate" the target. This can be done by a second aircraft, by ground troops or by the bomber itself.

They also have two air-to-air Sidewinder missiles for defensive use. Sidewinder is a well-proven short-range system in service with numerous air forces and navies around the world. It uses an infra-red system to home in on its target.

The lead aircraft of the pair is equipped with Thermal Imaging Airborne Laser Designator (TIALD) equipment slung beneath the aeroplane in a pod. In addition, the lead craft could carry another "bunker buster" Paveway 3 bomb or two of the lighter Paveway 2s.

The first GR1 pinpoints the target with its laser equipment, with co-ordinates programmed into the system from detailed maps before take-off, and the second aeroplane drops its bombs using the equipment from the lead aircraft.

The Paveway bombs have the capability to penetrate concrete, making them useful in attacks on aircraft shelters and command and control posts, some of which are heavily protected.

They are accurate to within yards from a height of up to 35,000ft because of the laser system. This system was unavailable early in the Gulf War and led to more dangerous low level missions.

KEY

- Missile attacks
- Al Firdos Airbase
- Tigris River
- 5 miles
- BAGHDAD
- Muthanna Airbase
- Rasheed Airport
- Oil refinery
- Presidential Palace
- Presidential Bunker
- Ba'ath Party HQ
- Republican Guard HQ
- Baghdad International Airport
- Baghdad International Airport
- Palace of Saddam Hussein
- Student's college
- Residential area
- ANTER SOURCE
- Toy shop
- Ba'ath Party offices
- Open area
- Guard post
- Concealment site
- Military barracks
- Restaurants
- Konja
- Incirlik
- CYPRUS
- SYRIA
- IRAQ
- IRAN
- SAUDI ARABIA
- BAHRAIN
- QATAR
- OMAN
- UAE
- Sharjah
- INDIAN OCEAN
- SEYCHELLES
- MAURITIUS
- 1,000 miles
- DIEGO GARCIA

KEY TARGET SITES

- Ballistic missile facilities
- Palaces suspected of storing weapons
- Air bases
- Republican Guards' Headquarters
- Chemical or biological weapons sites

US FORCES IN GULF

Numerous ships include:

- USS Enterprise aircraft carrier
- 2 Guided missile cruisers: USS Philippine Sea and Gettysburg
- 1 Guided missile destroyer: USS Stout
- 2 Anti Submarine destroyers: Nicholson and Hayler
- 1 Anti Submarine frigate: Klaring
- 2 Los Angeles class attack subs: Miami and Hampton
- Amphibious support group: USS Dubuque and Germantown
- 300 Tomahawk cruise missiles

BRITISH FORCES IN GULF

- 18 Tornado GR1s
- 4 Jaguar fighters
- 3 VC10 tankers
- HMS Boxer - frigate
- HMS Brambleleaf, Royal Fleet Auxiliary

3pm GMT Wednesday: 1st wave of British aircraft took off from Al Al Salem

KEY TARGET SITES

- 375,000 men serve in the army including:
- 15,000 Presidential Guard
- 7-8 divisions of Republican Guard
- 20,000 Fedayeen paramilitary force
- 350 aircraft
- 2,000 tanks
- 1,000 armoured fighting vehicles
- 2,000 artillery pieces

F117

Stealth fighter-bombers can carry 2 x 2,000lb laser-guided bombs or a combined payload of 5,000lb (over 2 tons). Just introduced a new single 5,000lb 'bunker buster' bomb - likely to have been used yesterday.

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Armaments:

- 4 Exocet medium range ship-to-ship missiles
- Sea Wolf short range surface-to-air missiles
- 20mm anti-aircraft cannon

Britain's coral island is platform for attacks

BY ANDREW MARSHALL

THE UNITED States attacks on Iraq have reminded the world of the strategic importance of a remote British island in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

The B-52 bombers flew from Diego Garcia, a US Navy base with a 12,000ft runway on a British-owned tropical island.

The island is a coral atoll of about 11 square miles, enclosing a 100ft deep lagoon. In the Chagos Archipelago, it is part of the British Indian Ocean Territory, a "colony" that was invented in the 1970s as British military forces left the Gulf and other strategic bases in the Indian Ocean. The island played a crucial part in the Gulf crisis in 1990-91 and in the UN intervention in Somalia in 1992.

Both British and American planes fly over the island. Like many of Britain's earlier possessions, it was acquired under

KEY AIRBASE



Diego Garcia: US 'consults Britain over using facilities'

a strategy of controlling the oceans; East Africa, Singapore, Calcutta and Australia are within 3,000 miles of it.

A British-US agreement of 1966, revised in 1976, makes the islands of the British Indian Ocean Territory available for "defence purposes" to both governments.

With the British Govern-

ment the only one in the world to express wholehearted support for the US attacks on southern Iraq, agreement to its use was not in doubt, but the US consulted Britain anyway, if only out of politeness.

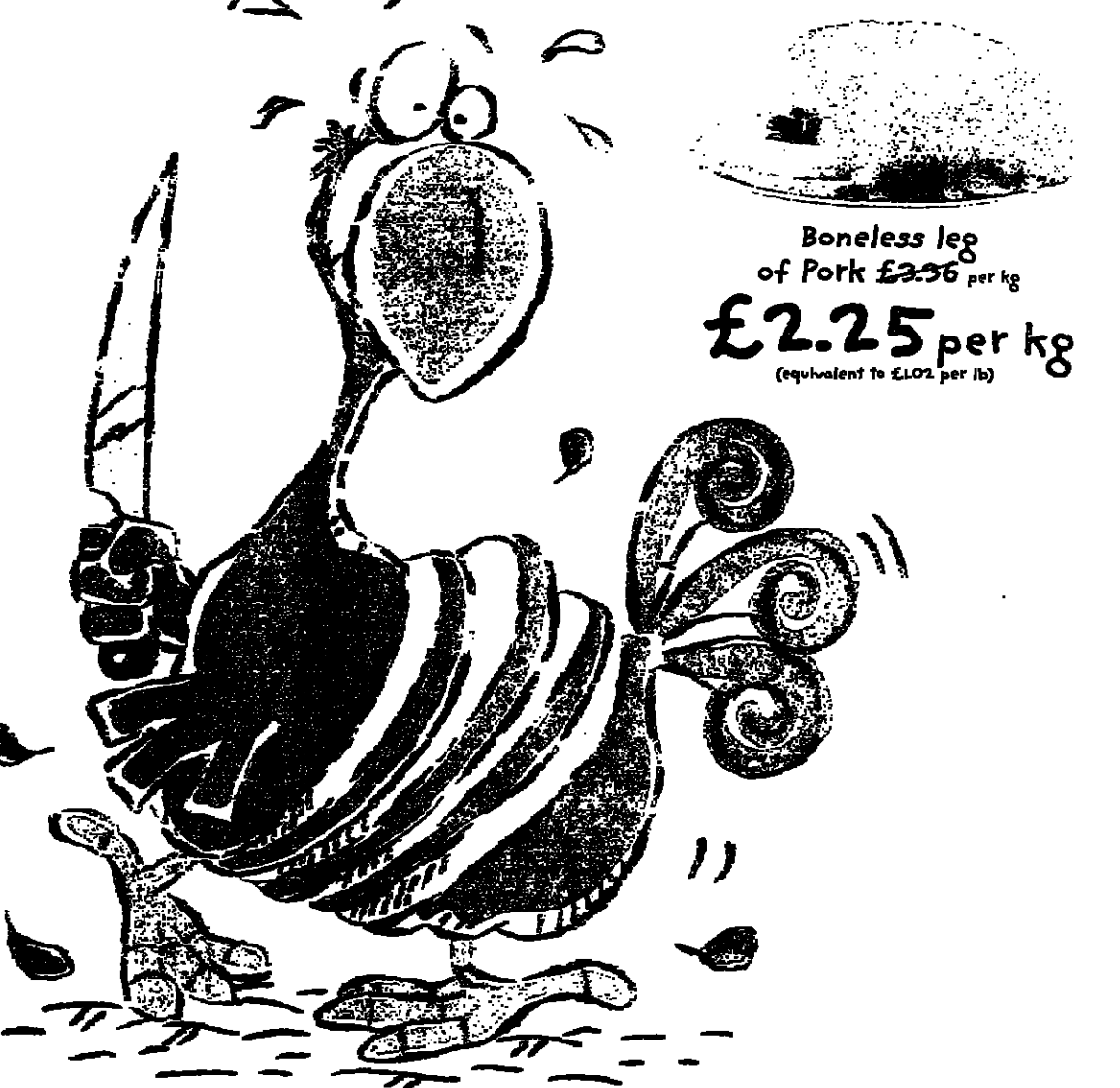
"In no way is it leased to the Americans," the Foreign Office said yesterday. "The US authorities consult us in advance through the normal diplomatic channels about using the defence facilities."

There is no town or substantial civilian population on the island. It was all removed when Britain converted the island into a military base, and relocated to Mauritius. The British presence consists of 30 Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel.

Some 900 US personnel are based on the island, along with five ships loaded with equipment for a US marine expeditionary brigade. The brigade, 15,000-strong, would fly in and leave on the ships ready to sail to any nearby trouble-spots, probably in Africa or the Middle East.

Like all American air bases, wherever they may be, the facilities are all-American, and include a bowling alley. Few British personnel have served there. "I wish I had," said one. "Have you seen the beach?"

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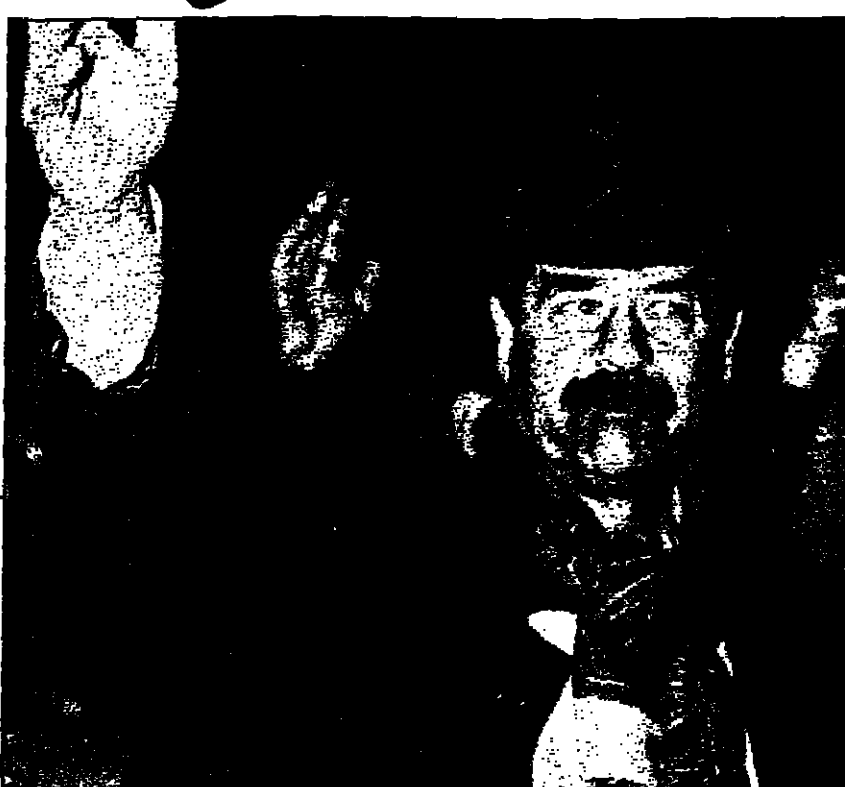


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Tony Blair and Bill Clinton hope the bombing campaign will clear the way for the Iraqi military to topple Saddam Hussein, but they know this is a gamble

Toppling Saddam will be long haul

NO ONE could say that Tony Blair and Bill Clinton are not singing from the same hymn sheet when it comes to Saddam Hussein.

When the Prime Minister emerged from Downing Street on Wednesday night, he said: "Our objectives in this military action are clear: to degrade his capability to build and use weapons of mass destruction."

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

and to diminish the threat he poses to his neighbours."

Minutes later, the President said: "Our mission is clear - to degrade his capacity to develop and use weapons of mass destruction or to threaten his neighbours."

The military side of the

equation may be clear, but the political strategy is opaque, and deliberately so. The US and Britain are hoping that the air strikes will undermine Saddam Hussein, and clear the way for the military to topple him, but they know this is a gamble.

In the longer term, they know they may have to learn to live with the Iraqi regime. In that sense, the air strikes are

both the last gasp of an old policy - containing Saddam through weapons inspections - and the first blast of a new one.

The old policy relied on four elements: weapons inspections, sanctions, a regional and international group of countries that were committed to con-

taining the regime, and the threat of military force. Each is of diminishing value.

The weapons inspections, certainly, are over, a fact now acknowledged by Britain and the US. Indeed, it is arguable that the UNSCOM mission has been dead for over a year. "Un-

com has been ineffective for some time," said Sandy Berger, the President's national security adviser.

So the most obvious reason for the strikes is to hit the known targets once and for all, knowing that there is little that can be done now within Iraq to prevent Saddam Hussein from secretly developing weapons of mass destruction.

Obviously, this course of action can not be repeated, especially given that the intelligence the West has will become gradually less useful. So what next? "We will pursue a long-term strategy to contain Iraq and its weapons of mass destruction, and work towards the day when Iraq has a government worthy of its people," said Mr Clinton.

Take the second part first: replacing Saddam. The covert efforts by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Secret Intelligence Service to topple the Iraqi leader have so far been farcical and disastrous. It is likely that the US and Britain hope that, by targeting units like the Special Republican Guard and the Special Security Service - key props of the regime, and the weapons concealment operation - they can open a window of opportunity for the Iraqi military to oust Saddam. But that is a pretty faint hope.

In the longer term, the US and Britain hope that Saddam will go, and that a better regime will emerge. "The hard fact is that so long as Saddam remains in power, he threatens the well-being of his people, the peace of his region and the security of the world," said Mr Clinton.

"The best way to end that threat once and for all is with a new Iraqi government - a government ready to live in peace with its neighbours. Bringing change in Baghdad will take time and effort. We will strengthen our engagement with the full range of Iraqi opposition forces and work with them effectively and prudently." The key word here is "time", something neither Washington nor London have any influence over.

So the longer-term plan has to involve thinking about life with Saddam for some years. The UN's "oil for food" programme will garner more resources for the regime, enabling it to improve conditions in the country and to help its supporters.

In a brilliant piece of analysis earlier this year, Anthony Cordesman, of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, looked at the question of "Living with Saddam".

"Much as we may dislike tyranny, Saddam's regime is one of the most effective authoritarian regimes of modern times. Saddam may not be popular, but he is accepted and he is in control," he said.

Military force will clearly be a part of this long-term strategy. "We must be prepared to use force again if Saddam takes threatening actions," said President Clinton. "The credible threat to use force, and when necessary, the actual use of force, is the surest way to contain Saddam's weapons of mass destruction program, curtail his aggression and prevent another Gulf War."

"So long as Iraq remains out of compliance, we will work with the international community to maintain and enforce economic sanctions," he added.

But sanctions will be increasingly hard to maintain. Iraq will, without UNSCOM, be able to start replacing its military material and developing weapons of mass destruction. The message of the strikes is partly that Saddam is there, and will be there for some time.

That is why the strikes that are taking place are intended to do as much damage as possible: they are the beginning of what may be a long haul.

THE STRATEGY

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Backbenchers dismayed at Blair support

LABOUR DISSENT

AS LABOUR MPs sat in a crowded House of Commons yesterday, their discussion of the Iraq crisis kept returning to one issue: Tony Blair's high-profile role. "He seems to want to be Thatcher and Churchill rolled into one," said one Labour backbencher.

Even MPs who supported the bombing were surprised that the Prime Minister had announced Wednesday night's raids more than 40 minutes before Bill Clinton told America.

Close aides say Mr Blair's fierce patriotism means he does not pull his punches during international crises. "He almost wants to fly the Tornados himself," one minister said.

Mr Blair is in no doubt that the use of force is justified. "It would be a dereliction of our duty if we had not taken the action we have done," he told yesterday's cabinet meeting.

Ministers admit privately that the imminent vote on the President's impeachment is a case of "unfortunate timing".

But Mr Blair is adamant that Mr Clinton's actions are not related to his domestic traumas.

The lukewarm international support for military strikes is a far cry from the impressive coalition assembled against Saddam Hussein after his invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Britain launched a diplomatic offen-

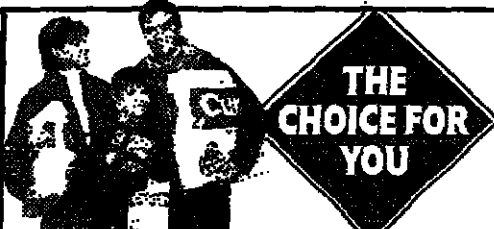
BY ANDREW GRICE
Political Editor

sive yesterday, when the Prime Minister wrote to the other 14 European Union leaders, sent messages to top Commonwealth countries and tried to make contact with Russia and China - both of which have been critical of the strikes.

Last night, Downing Street denied that Britain and the US were isolated, saying that there had been positive reactions from Germany, Spain, Canada, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Japan and Australia.

Although Mr Blair won the support of the Tories, the Liberal Democrats and the majority of Labour MPs, ministers are worried that a sizeable minority of Labour backbenchers will cause problems in the days ahead. George Galloway, one of the most vociferous critics, said more backbenchers now opposed action than in February, when 28 voted against military action and about 50 abstained.

Back in 1991, four current ministers - John Prescott, Robin Cook, Clare Short and Margaret Beckett - incurred the wrath of Neil Kinnock, then leader of the Opposition, by expressing reservations about the Gulf War when Mr Kinnock was desperate to prove Labour was no longer "soft" on defence.



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صكرا من الامن

Clinton called the PM from Air Force One: 'Get ready to strike'

THE COUNTDOWN

NOT NORMALLY the most cheerful of locales, the United Nations Correspondents' Association club in UN headquarters in New York was seething on Tuesday evening. The club's annual Christmas party started at 6pm and reporters were flocking in for free drink and eats and for a relaxed end-of-year gossip among friends. There was even a small tree, clad in homemade decorations and white cotton wool.

But reporters, even when they are drinking, never retract their antennae altogether. The party was in full swing when some among them began to guess that their work was not done for the day. Minutes earlier, the guest of honour had arrived, Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, and with him had come a gaggle of his close advisers. A few of them had some news to impart and it was very important.

It had been two hours since Richard Butler, the chairman of the UN special commission on disarming Iraq, Unscow, had delivered to Mr Annan a 10-page report that would become of utmost significance. It was his assessment of the level of Iraq's compliance with UN resolutions in the month since the United States and Britain at the last moment halted military strikes against Iraq on 14 November. The advisers had read it and were worried. Saddam Hussein the report said, was breaking his promises all over again.

Here, at a party that was meant to be off-duty time for everyone, emerged the first indication that a new crisis with Iraq was about to erupt. Wire reporters filed rapid stories signalling the imminent release of the report. It was hours later, at a little after 9pm New York time, that the same correspondents saw the report first hand and relayed to the world the extent of the bad news. To the fury of some of the Security Council's members, they saw it too but several minutes later.

Not everyone, however, was surprised by Mr Butler's damning conclusions. The US had been expecting as much for days. And for days it had been preparing what it considered could be the only reasonable response. President Bill Clinton, with or without his impeachment woes, would have to deliver on the pledge he had made on 14 November. Name it, if President Saddam was

BY DAVID USBOURNE
in New York

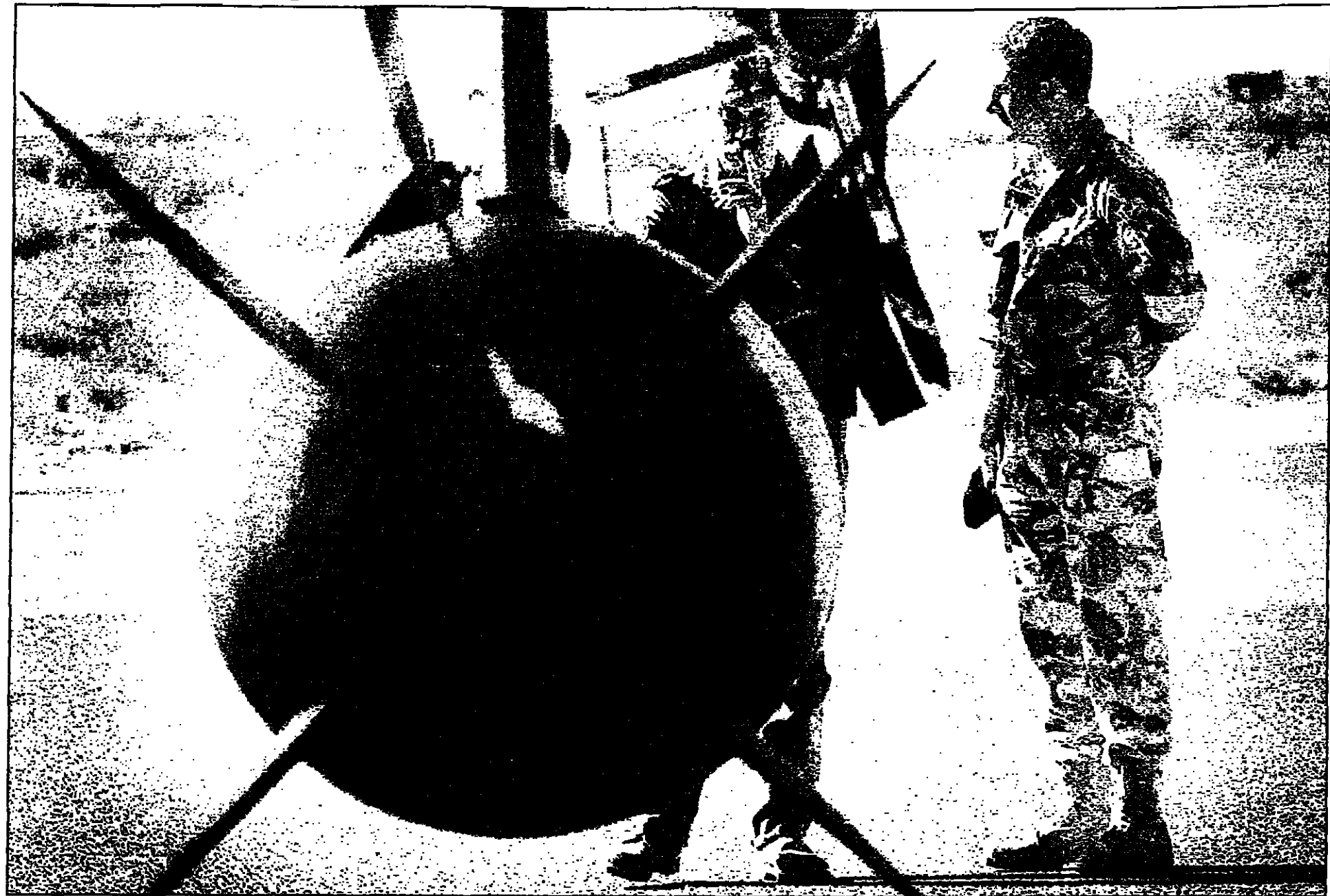
found to have fallen out of line with his obligations to Unscow once more, a military attack would have to be launched without any warning.

Preparations had gone into high gear as early as late on Sunday night, when President Clinton was in Jerusalem pondering his public task of the following day - attending a meeting of the Palestine National Council in Gaza. At midnight, he held his first emergency meeting with his national security adviser, Sandy Berger, on what even by then seemed inevitable - the unleashing of cruise missiles.

Many in Mr Clinton's foreign affairs team had for weeks been telling him that his decision to call off the attacks in mid-November had been an error. Most frustrated among its members had been Vice-President Al Gore and the Defense Secretary, William Cohen. This time, the President knew, there could be no hesitation.

Consultations on priming US and British forces for action continued through Monday. Back in Washington, there was complete ignorance, however. All attention on that day was on the spectacle of the President juggling his joint tasks of achieving his peace mission in the Middle East and monitoring the momentum for his impeachment that seemed to be building by the hour.

The crunch came on Tuesday. When Mr Butler's report finally made its journey from Mr Annan's office to the Security Council and its contents were leaking into the news wires, Mr Clinton was on his flight bound



RAF pilots under the wing of a Tornado yesterday at the Ali al-Salem air base, 50 miles north of Kuwait City, where 12 of the aircraft are stationed

AFP



An Iraqi walks through rubble in Tikrit, north of Baghdad



An Iraqi woman helps her children through rubble after overnight air strikes

AFP

for home. The flight should have been a window for him to relax after his gruelling three-day mission in the Middle East. But instead, at 39,000 feet, he was plunged into making final decisions in a new crisis about which the public back at home still had no inkling.

As the converted presidential Jumbo Jet powered through the stratosphere above southern Europe towards Washington, Mr Clinton called his advisers into his executive cabin. Around the small conference table, seated in cream leather chairs, the President,

Mr Berger, and the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, pondered their choice. Joining the conversation by secure telephone link from Washington were Mr Gore, George Tenet, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Mr Cohen. The President's wife, Hillary, and daughter, Chelsea, sat in another cabin, separated from the momentous discussion by a bulkhead.

All at the meeting were agreed. Mr Butler had confirmed what they had feared all along - President Saddam was once more in violation of his

obligations to the UN. Three hours into the flight, Mr Clinton placed a telephone call to No 10 Downing Street to confer with the Prime Minister, Tony Blair. And the decision was made. The President gave the order for his forces to prepare for an imminent bombardment of Iraq.

It was just before midnight on Tuesday in Washington when the clatter of helicopter blades announced the arrival of the President from Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland where minutes before his aircraft had landed. He did not go

directly to bed, but stayed up until 1.30am to telephone congressional leaders to inform them of the plan.

On Wednesday morning, the breakfast-time television news broke the astonishing news. Just when all national attention had been focused on the President's domestic plight and the vote to impeach that everyone believed would happen on Thursday in the House of Representatives, a whole new drama had burst forth. An attack on Iraq, the on-air correspondents gasped, appeared to be imminent.

So began a truly remarkable day. In New York, the UN Security Council met on and off all Wednesday to agonise over a crisis it knew it could do nothing to avert. President Clinton held a 7.30am meeting with his security advisers in the White House situation room. Afterwards, he began preparing the address, which he knew he would be delivering on television that evening to inform the American people of the strike.

With every spare minute, Mr Clinton worked the phones talking to law-makers on Capitol Hill. His conversations di-

rectly reflected the dichotomy of his personal drama. He talked not just about Iraq but also about impeachment. In the early afternoon, he spent nearly an hour in the Oval Office with Arno Houghton, a Republican moderate from New York who was still planning to oppose impeachment.

President Clinton's last meeting with his security team happened at 1pm, Washington time. The final order to launch the attack was given. At 3.12pm, the first Tomahawk cruise missile took to the air, the first volley in Operation Desert Fox. Its travel time was calculated at one hour 54 minutes.

At 5.30 pm, the President had been scheduled to meet with another Republican wavering on impeachment, Christopher Shays of Connecticut. But by then, the first missiles were slamming into their targets in Baghdad. The meeting was postponed just as on Capitol Hill, a reluctant Republican House leadership was announcing that the vote, too, would be put off until the military operation was over.

There remained only one task for the President - to deliver his address to the American people, which he did at 6pm, 24 hours after the first public indications of the crisis.

HOURLY-BY-HOURLY GUIDE TO THE AIR OFFENSIVE

Wednesday, 9.50pm (GMT): Anti-aircraft fire starts in Baghdad.

10.00: The US confirms 100 missiles have been launched.

10.20: Prime Minister Tony Blair says there is "no alternative" to the attack.

11.00: Sixty people protest in Downing Street.

11.15: The Pentagon briefs US Defense Secretary William Cohen and Joint Chief of Staff General Hugh Shelton. The military build-up is to increase.

11.30: More anti-aircraft fire in Baghdad.

11.50: France expresses "regret" that the Iraqi authorities have not co-operated with the weapons inspectors. Russia and China are also critical.

12.00: US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright says the fight is not against the Iraqi people. She drops strong hints to the Iraqi opposition to take control.

Yesterday 12.20am: Sandy Berger, US National Security Adviser, justifies

the attack. There are reports of strikes near one of President Saddam Hussein's palaces.

1.40: In New York, the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan says the attack is "a sad day for the world".

1.45: President Saddam urges Iraq to "resist and fight the enemies of God".

2.10: The Ministry of Information in Baghdad says a missile hit a water facility in a residential area injuring four people and causing a large crater.

3.20: An Iraqi doctor says 45 dead, 200 casualties.

8.51: Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov calls the air strikes "outrageous".

8.56: Air strikes against Iraq will not end today, according to Foreign Secretary Robin Cook.

10.20: Angry Palestinians burn the US flag and denounce President Bill Clinton for attacking Iraq.

11.44: Baghdad radio says the home of one of President Saddam's daughters was hit.

11.56: Iran protests over a stray missile that crashed into Khormashahr a city near its border with Iraq.

12.08pm: Mr Cohen says preliminary reports showed a "good measure of success" in hitting Iraqi targets.

12.15: President Saddam visits some of the sites hit by US missiles in his first public appearance since the strikes began.

3.11: Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed al-Sahaf says US attacks caused heavy

casualties among the civilian population.

3.43: Mr Blair says British Tornado warplanes were in action over Iraq.

4.13: The Pentagon says "200-plus" Tomahawk cruise missiles were used in the first wave of strikes and that "they have plans for 300-plus more to go."

5.33: US Air Force B-52 bombers and Navy attack jets begin a second round of cruise missile and bombing raids against targets in Iraq.

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Representatives had come to Washington ready to bury Clinton, instead they found themselves praising him

Parties go to war on impeachment

CONGRESS

REPUBLICAN LEADERS appeared to have decided last night to open the impeachment debate of President Bill Clinton today on the House floor and vote by tomorrow afternoon even if the attacks against Iraq are not over. But this move ran into opposition. The debate had been set for yesterday but Republicans grudgingly agreed to a postponement after Mr Clinton ordered airstrikes against Iraq. Representatives had come to Washington to bury the President and found themselves praising him instead.

Summoned back to Washington for only the second House impeachment debate in US history, they trooped into the Chamber yesterday to chorus a paean to America's "men

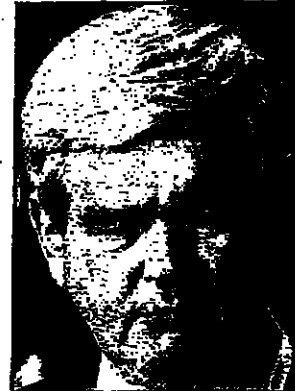
By MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

and women in uniform" and to train their fire on another enemy, that old Washington standby, President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

But Republican leaders were determined to force the agenda on impeachment.

The debate, postponed for an indeterminate "few days" following US and British strikes on Iraq, was all but forgotten in the favour whipped up around US troops now "in harm's way".

In a reminder of the day's original agenda, hundreds of coaches converged on the Capitol, bringing people who had expected a prayer vigil in the President's support as the House debated his fate. Called



Gingrich: We are a nation ready to lead the world

by the Rev Jesse Jackson and organised by his Chicago-based Rainbow-Push coalition, it had been intended to illustrate support for Mr Clinton outside Washington in a final attempt to convince Republicans to change their vote.

Suddenly, though, the representatives in the Capitol and those outside were singing the same tune: polls yesterday showed 70 per cent of respondents approving Mr Clinton's use of force against Iraq. Asked by a reporter about accusations that he hoped to deflect attention from impeachment, he flashed back: "It's not true."

Listening to the House "debate" yesterday it was almost possible to believe the nation and their representatives were united. The resolution, sponsored by Republicans, offered support for the troops in the Gulf and called for the removal of President Saddam. The first speaker was the outgoing House Speaker, the Representative from Georgia, a slightly thinner, freer Newt Gingrich.

As Speaker, he said, he had been "legitimately consulted" by the President in advance of the strikes. "It would be nice," he said, "to run and hide, find some grand isolation in which to cower," but today, "in this age", it was impossible. "We have a chance today to say to the world: 'no matter what our constitutional process, no mat-

ter what our debates at home, we are as a nation prepared to lead the world.' Thereafter, the air was thick with reminiscences of war and heroism (the speakers included no fewer than three Gulf war veterans and a clutch of Vietnam veterans).

But a close reading of the resolution - which was passed by acclamation - and some throwaway lines in some speeches, showed the extent to which the debate had been stagemanaged and how close to the surface were the risks. The resolution made no mention to the President or support for him; support was for the commanders and troops in the field. Republicans had to balance their determination to impeach the President and their genuine rejection of his conduct in the Lewinsky affair with the patriotic requirement for support at a time of national crisis - and the Republicans split.

Trent Lott, their leader in the Senate, said that while "all Americans will fully support our troops in battle", he personally could not support military action "at this time ... Both the timing and the policy are subject to question."

Dick Armey, his deputy, said that "the suspicion about Clinton's motives" could "in itself be a powerful argument for impeachment ... the President has given millions of people around the world reason to doubt he has sent Americans into battle for the right reasons." Republican anger was less defused than in suspense, and pressure for the impeachment debate to be held sooner rather than later simmered in the background. But if senior Democrats have their way, the delay could last into next week. The House Minority Leader, Dick Gephardt, said: "What will Saddam Hussein think if, at the very time our people over there are attacking him militarily, the Congress here is moving on an effort to take the President out of office?"

'Saddam breaks a law every day'

AMERICA SPEAKS

RICHARD LANG, who has left his dry-cleaning business in Connecticut for a day of Christmas shopping in Manhattan with his wife and daughter, does not even want to talk about any domestic motives that President Bill Clinton did or did not have in attacking Iraq. Such talk, he says, is just not right.

"When the troops leave our shores partisanship has to stop," he says, sheltering from rain in the Rockefeller complex. "You have to remember there are families with loved ones out there in the Gulf."

Besides, he says, what difference will it make to the Republican effort to impeach Mr Clinton? "Have the vote on Friday or have it on Monday, it doesn't matter."

It helps that Mr Lang has no doubt that Saddam Hussein deserves the wrath of American and British forces. "If anything, Clinton should have done it before," he said.

Indeed, in serial interviews with Americans in midtown yesterday, there was near unanimity of opinion that punishing Saddam was, in itself, the right thing to do. It was the swell of opinion that informed several overnight snap polls in the United States showing support for the bombing operation running at roughly four to one.

The same polls also showed a majority unwilling to believe that Mr Clinton ordered the strikes simply to stave off the impeachment vote pending in the House of Representatives.

In New York, news of the strikes on Wednesday came for many via the jumbotron television screen in Times Square. A large crowd had gathered in the early evening when the screen showed Mr Clinton addressing the nation for 15 minutes to explain his reasons for the assault.

"I think Clinton did the right thing," offered Salvatore Natali,

By DAVID USBORNE
in New York

a veteran of the Second World War who yesterday was selling chenille scarves to tourists from a trestle table on Fifth Avenue. The table, though, was covered in clear plastic to ward off the rain, and he had no customers. "Saddam Hussein has chemicals and he could hit whole populations, including his own, and he has germs too."

Where people divide, however, is over what motivated President Clinton to order the attack. For Mr Natali, the suggestion that it was meant as a diversion from the President's impeachment woes is ridiculous. "President Clinton should go down in history as the greatest president we ever had."

Chris Steidinger, an aspiring chiropractor who for now is working in a museum shop at the Rockefeller Center, was altogether more cynical. "Saddam should be hit, he breaks an international law every day of the week, doesn't he? He is a tyrant. But I think the timing was all wrong. President Clinton wants to stay in power and that's what it's about."

Not everyone was celebrating the attack. Ruth, who would not give her full name, paused at her counter at the Rockefeller Center ice rink where she hands out skates.

"I think it's horrible, what's happening. I'm against war. I'm a pacifist. If you don't stop war then war will always happen. When are we going to stop it?"

But she is positively indignant that people might think the President was attempting a diversion from impeachment. "I don't think that's right, because that would be so awful, I mean to send people to war for that kind of reason. No, I can't believe that."

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PM shows the strain in face of resounding support

MOST PEOPLE, if required to read out a 25 minute speech in front of a large and potentially sceptical crowd, wouldn't put money on their ability to make it from start to finish without a single slip of the tongue. But Tony Blair could make such a bet with fair confidence that he wouldn't lose very often. It is one of the Prime Minister's less salient talents that he hardly ever makes a fluff when he reads a statement to the House, even when he departs from the fairway of his script into the rough of scribbled addenda.

Yesterday, though, as he made his statement on the bombing of Iraq, the accuracy of his transmis-

sion wasn't quite up to its usual standards - seven or eight times there was a mispronunciation or slur, or a tiny hesitation which wasn't part of the familiar halting rhythm he adopts when the occasion calls for high seriousness.

I wouldn't want to suggest that these were structural cracks in the facade of deliberated resolve which the Prime Minister wanted to present - there was absolutely no prospect of a large slab of statesmanlike purpose sheering off, to reveal a jerry-built construct beneath - not least because almost every MP present was at pains not to lean too heavily against the plaster-

work. But these little vocal glitches were evidence that the structure was under pressure, microscopic stress fractures testifying to the considerable load that was bearing down on the speaker.

As I say, the burden wasn't that of parliamentary scrutiny. "As I speak, British Tornado aircraft are engaged in action," Mr Blair had said near the beginning of his statement, and he must have known as he did so that he was triggering a sensitive reflex - one that continued to twitch in the questions and debate that followed. As speaker after speaker made the required genuflection to our brave men and

THE SKETCH



THOMAS SUTCLIFFE

women. This was just jaw-jaw, but out there somewhere acts of war were taking place and the instinct of solidarity could be relied on. Nor was Mr Blair worried about

the stray rounds from his backbenches - "friendly fire" you could call it, if anything remotely like amity could be detected in the seething indignation of George Galloway and Tony Benn. Those he could dismiss with a kind of baffled bemusement.

When Mr Galloway passionately denounced "a new crusade, led not by Richard the Lionheart but by Clinton the Liar," Mr Blair rose and shook his head. "I find it - well, to be honest I get beyond anger," he said resignedly, before pointing out how perverse it was to attack the American President while offering not a word of condemnation of Saddam Hussein.

But what was really putting the pressure on Mr Blair, I think, were the remaining splinters of the doubt he must have entertained at some time. He had the demeanour of a man who had convinced himself, but was happy to hear the arguments once more, to hear himself frame them out loud and hear a murmur of assent from his audience. If that was the case he got what he wanted, from a House that had clearly decided the moment for debate had passed and had little remaining patience for the only true reason d'être of the chamber - dissenting voices.

The bravery of British airmen

was invoked repeatedly, with a faintly distasteful glibness, but the courage in the chamber came from those kamikaze backbenchers who took off in the face of insuperable odds. They were fighting on the wrong side and were poignantly vulnerable to even the lightest fire: Tony Benn, engines screaming as he zeroed in on the aircraft carrier *Western Hypocrite*, stuttered off course after Christopher Leslie had intervened to ask him what alternative course of action he would suggest. But, even if you think them mad or bad, there was something impressive about the determination with which they went down blazing.

Blair vows to weaken dictator

COMMONS DEBATE

THE PRIME Minister said yesterday there had been "substantial" military damage inflicted on Iraq over Saddam Hussein's failure to comply with the United Nations resolution on weapons inspections.

In a sombre statement to the Commons, Tony Blair denied it was a "specific objective" to remove the dictator, stressing that such action would require hundreds of thousands of ground troops.

"The decision to take military action against Iraq was taken with great regret. It is a heavy responsibility. There will be casualties in Iraq, despite all our efforts. We have absolutely no quarrel with the Iraqi people. We have acted because we have to counter a real and present danger from a tyrant who has never hesitated to use whatever weapons come to hand."

Rising to a crowded chamber, Mr Blair strongly refuted the timing of the air strikes were "somehow linked to the internal affairs of the United States", saying: "I have no doubt whatsoever that action is justified now. That is my strongly personal view."

Had Bill Clinton acted differently, out of regard to internal matters to United States politics, that would have been a dereliction of his duty as President, he added.

The Prime Minister said that once the military action was over, the UN would be better placed than if it had to go on dealing with a Saddam Hussein whose military capability had not been weakened.

"First reports from last night's operations suggest that they were successful and inflicted the kind of military damage we were seeking."

"If Saddam will not see reason, then after this military operation is concluded, we will work to ensure that Saddam's weakened military capability cannot be rebuilt and that the threat he poses is fully contained. We have the ability to do so, even without Uncom [the UN weapons inspection commission] if necessary."

Britain would "maintain and enforce" rigorously the existing sanctions, Mr Blair said. "If necessary, and if we have serious evidence from our intensive surveillance, or from our intel-

BY SARAH SCHAEFER
Political Reporter

ligence, that his capability is being rebuilt, we will be ready to take further military action. Saddam should have no doubt of our continuing resolve."

But Mr Blair said the objectives of "degrading" Saddam Hussein's ability to build weapons of mass destruction and weakening his military capability were "achievable".

The action taken was "proportionate to the serious dangers he poses to his immediate neighbours, the Middle East region and the international community more widely."

"The targets, throughout Iraq, have been very carefully selected to reflect these objectives. We are taking every possible care to avoid civilian casualties or damage to ordinary civilian infrastructure."

Mr Blair told MPs it was "vital that people understand that the threat from Saddam Hussein was real, not theoretical" because the UN weapons inspectors had been "constantly harassed, threatened, deceived and lied to."

They had "achieved a huge amount" in destroying Iraq's chemical and biological weapons capability but "much - too much - remains unaccounted for."

The Prime Minister praised the bravery and professionalism of the allied forces, saying: "I know the whole House will join me in wishing them as well as they risk their lives to help ensure peace and stability in the Middle East and more widely."

To cheers from all sides, he added: "We are proud of them."

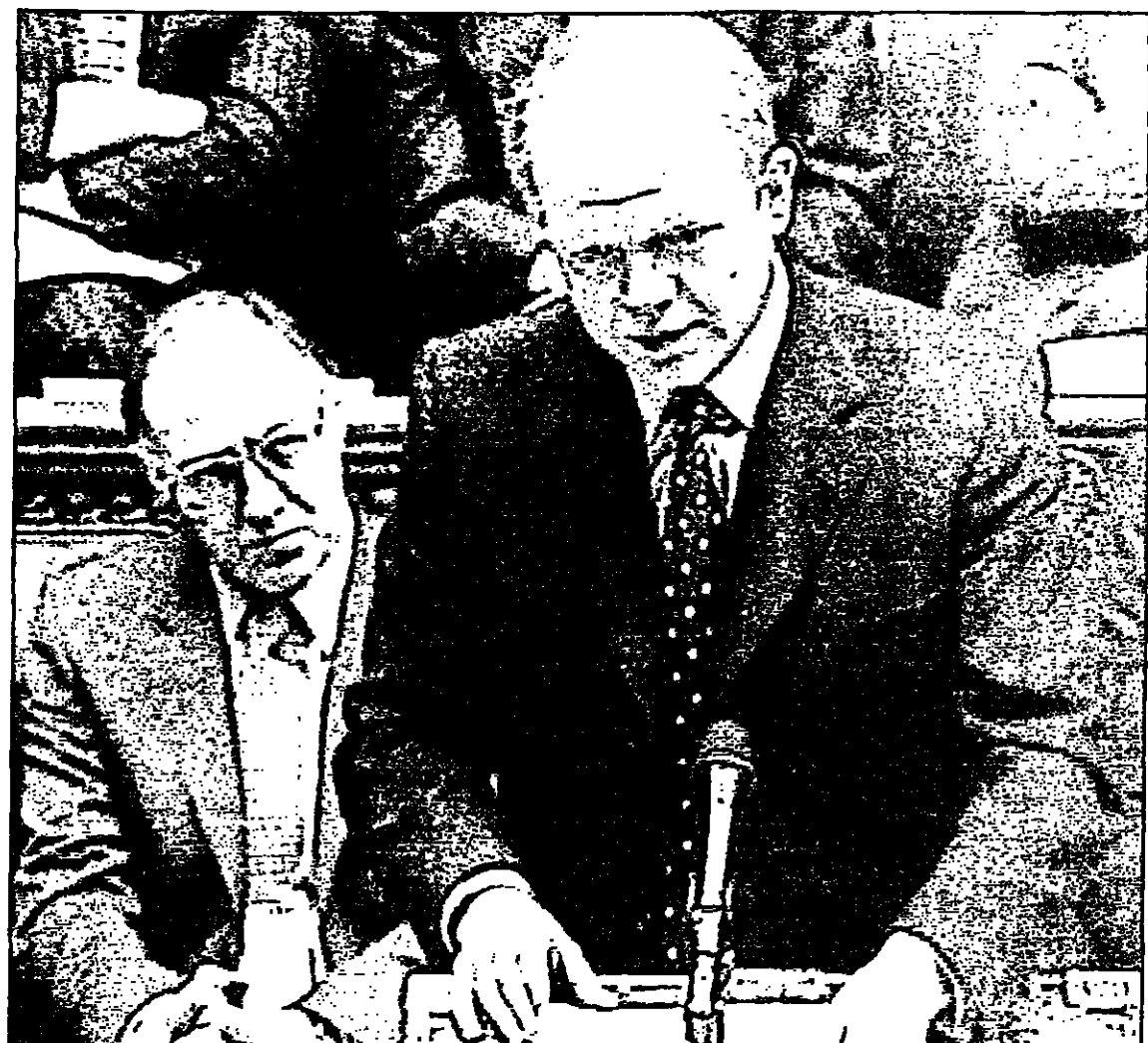
Later, during further debate on the air strikes, Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said: "As long as Saddam remains in power, we will remain resolute in our determination that he will not be allowed to fulfil his ambitions to develop weapons of mass destruction."

The Tory leader, William Hague, offered "full support" for the action, pledging: "We on this side of the House share your view that you and President Clinton had no alternative but to order a military response to the continuous deceit of Saddam."

George Galloway, Labour MP for Glasgow Kelvin, was



Robin Cook and William Hague find common ground in yesterday's debate on the military strikes against Iraq and Saddam Hussein



jeered by his own party when he said Britain was "diminished and degraded" by its attacks on Iraq.

He told the Prime Minister: "I wonder if you thought, as I did at lunchtime, as the bleeding women and children were carried into hospitals that those who were diminished and degraded were not the Iraqis, but us - diminished and degraded by being reduced to being a tail on this verminous and mangy Desert Fox."

"The attack has not been led by Richard the Lionheart, but by Clinton the Liar," he added. Dennis Canavan, Labour MP for Falkirk, added: "British and Iraqi lives are being put at risk in a desperate attempt to save Clinton's skin."

Menzies Campbell, Liberal Democrat foreign affairs and defence spokesman, said these were "sombre and anxious moments" for Britain. "The air strikes should be seen neither as a cause for celebration nor for satisfaction, but as a painful necessity and as a last resort to which we have been driven when all other options have been exhausted."

Stuart Bell, Labour MP for Middlesbrough, asked Mr Blair: "Will you recall how German troops were in the Rhineland in 1936? If Adolf Hitler had been stopped then, 20 million people may have not lost their lives."

Parliamentary Labour Party chairman Clive Soley, MP for Ealing Acton, gave the action his full backing, adding that many British Muslims opposed President Saddam.

He said: "Many of them would agree with me in saying that dictators that have so disfigured the face of the 20th century do need to be stopped. Let us go into the 21st century proud of the role that we have played, difficult though it may be."

However, Tony Benn,

Labour MP for Chesterfield, condemned the attacks, maintaining the Government was breaking UN regulations because two members of the Security Council, Russia and China, opposed the air strikes.

"Military action was tried seven years ago when 200,000 Iraqis were killed, and Saddam is stronger than he was."

"There are many people in the world - and I am one of them - who believe that what has been done yesterday is deeply immoral and contrary to an ethical foreign policy of which we boast."

Tam Dalyell, MP for Linlithgow, echoed his concerns, raising the threat of environmental damage if missiles hit military sites.

Gerald Kaufman, MP for Manchester Gorton, told MPs how there was a "feeling of nausea" among MPs at the suggestion that Mr Blair was doing a "cronyish favour" for Bill Clinton. He added: "When our men are being asked to risk their lives that is despicable."

Bruce George, chairman of the Commons Defence Select Committee, said the present "charge" illustrated that "if we decide as a nation to spend less than currently projected for defence then we must be honest and say that there will be tasks like this that we are not going to be able to discharge."

Tory former cabinet minister, Douglas Hogg, MP for Sleaford and North Hykeham, said one tactic to oust Saddam Hussein would be to encourage an uprising by Shia Muslims in the south of Iraq and by the Kurds in the north.

But he warned that without "substantial and effective military cover" from the US and UK this should not be instigated because it could lead to a "great loss of life."

THE NEW WORDS OF WAR

WORDS ARE weapons of war too - sometimes heavily camouflaged and sometimes naked in their aggressive purpose. And with every war a new device is usually deployed for the first time, to confuse and alarm the enemy.

In the Gulf War most of us learnt the language of "collateral damage" for the first time, a way of saying "charred and dismembered civilians" which wouldn't disrupt the easy, bantering triumph of those locker-room debriefing sessions.

This time, the new arrival on the battlefield is "degraded and diminished", and it has already proved to be a hazardous piece of verbal ordinance, as likely to blow up in the speaker's face as to concentrate fire on the enemy. The mistake was to allow a

moral ambiguity to be incorporated into what should have been a phrase of clinical and technocratic detachment. That is where "degrade" is borrowed from - from the world of the lab and the white coat. In chemistry it means to reduce a substance to a simpler molecular structure, in geology to wear down rocks, in physics to reduce energy to a less convertible form - all senses which no doubt register the desires of many people with respect to the current Iraqi regime.

Tony Blair has shown a preference for such scientific procedures over the B-movie heroics of other leaders. Where George Bush talked of "a line in the sand" over which Saddam had crossed, Mr Blair noted that the Iraqi

president had failed to meet the UN "benchmarks" for "compliance", as if this was a matter of a dodgy imported kettle which wouldn't get its safety certificate. "Degraded and diminished" sounds as if it is part of this vocabulary, but it admits something unwanted with its moral overtones. Those who use it forget that if degrading yourself is bad, degrading others isn't much better, particularly if they simply have the bad luck to be standing next to your real target.

Destroy Saddam Hussein's weapons by all means, shatter his military system. He deserves it. But don't degrade them; the recoil from the phrase is too powerful to make it safe.

TOM SUTCLIFFE

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Extradition: Unprecedented ruling overturns decision that refused former Chilean dictator immunity from prosecution

Law lords allow appeal for Pinochet

FIVE LAW lords took the unprecedented step yesterday of overturning an earlier panel's decision that refused the former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet immunity from prosecution.

The unanimous ruling by the five law lords was greeted with delight by supporters of the general, offering the prospect that he may yet avoid extradition to Spain to face charges of torture, kidnapping and conspiracy to murder.

Lawyers for General Pinochet had successfully argued that the original ruling was flawed because Lord Hoffmann, one of the judges on the panel, had failed to disclose his relationship with Amnesty International. The human rights group had been present as interveners during the hearing and argued that the general should not be protected by immunity.

The House of Lords is supposed to be the court of last resort and its ruling the final word on any case, although it is open to challenge in the European courts. The appeal by General Pinochet's lawyers against the law lords' ruling that he was not immune to prosecution set a precedent of challenging their decisions.

After yesterday's ruling it was revealed that the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, had written to the senior law lord, Lord Browne-Wilkinson, demanding new measures to prevent the situation recurring.

He wrote: "My request to you is that you... ensure that at any time any committee is being composed to hear an appeal that its proposed members consider together whether any of their number might appear to be subject to a conflict of interest, and in order to ensure impartiality... require any law lord to disclose any such circumstances to the parties, and

BY KIM SENGUPTA



General Pinochet: A new Lords hearing

not sit if any party objects and the committee so determines."

Lord Hoffmann was yesterday out of the country. One Tory MP Gerald Howarth, said that he must consider his future. "It is a quite remarkable twist of events and must make Lord Hoffmann question his position as a law lord," he said.

According to legal experts Lord Hoffmann's resignation would only become a strong possibility if the law lords said in their reasoning behind yesterday's decision - due to be published in January - that he had actually demonstrated bias in his decision. No law lord has resigned since the present system was devised in 1876.

Delivering the judgment in the House of Lords, Lord Browne-Wilkinson said: "In the special circumstances of the case, including the fact that Amnesty International was joined as interveners and appeared by counsel before appellate committee, Lord Hoffmann, who did not disclose his links with Amnesty International, was disqualified from sitting."

It was revealed in *The Independent* that solicitors acting for General Pinochet had re-

ceived material earlier this year highlighting Lord Hoffmann's links with Amnesty International Charity. But his lawyers stressed in the Lords that Lord Hoffmann himself should have disclosed the connection, and because he did not, General Pinochet remained unaware of them.

A new Lords hearing has been scheduled for the new year. The decision by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, to allow an extradition request from Spain to go ahead, based on the original Lords ruling, remains active. However, the extradition proceedings are now expected to be held in abeyance until the new hearing decides on the question of immunity. Who pays the cost of the various legal actions, said to be running at more than £1m, will also be decided at the conclusion of the case.

The Tory spokesman on home affairs, Sir Norman Fowler, reviewed his call for Mr Straw to send General Pinochet home. "This is a case which should be settled in Chile, not here in Britain," he said. However, the Home Office said yesterday that Mr Straw did not intend to intervene at this stage and would let the legal process take its course.

Amnesty International yesterday expressed disappointment at the decision, but said the legal battle would go on. Baroness Thatcher, who had called for General Pinochet's release, refused to comment on the day's developments.

The leader of the Chilean senate, Andres Zaldivar, said during a visit to Spain he was very pleased with the "positive" decision. Carlos Reyes, spokesman for former Chilean political prisoners group Chile Democrático, said: "I am in total shock... From the very beginning I believed justice would be done... Now I am not so sure."



Lord Hoffmann: Some claim he "should have known better" than to vote against immunity for Pinochet

Hoffmann's fall from legal grace

BY KIM SENGUPTA

LORD HOFFMANN may be reflecting today how easy it is for a halo to slip.

Just three weeks ago, after casting the final and decisive vote against Augusto Pinochet's claim of immunity, he was the toast of the liberal intelligentsia as the pleasantly surprising progressive face of the legal establishment. Yesterday, with that victory turned to ashes, some of the same people were shaking their heads and muttering "Hoffmann should have known better."

After yesterday's 5-0 overturning of the Pinochet judgment by Lord Hoffmann's fellow law lords, one senior lawyer said: "Lennie Hoffmann was no doubt fully confident

that he would be objective and unbiased, and that's all that mattered to him. He couldn't see it from the point of view of an outsider. It's the sort of lack of common sense that some very bright people suffer from."

The Pinochet case is not the first occasion Lord Hoffmann has been involved in controversial legal action. In one case, his stand was directly opposed to that of Amnesty: sitting on the Privy Council, he refused an appeal against execution of a convicted murderer whose appeal Amnesty had backed.

At the time of the Neil Hamilton "cash for questions" row, it was Lord Hoffmann who put

down an amendment to change the law on parliamentary privilege, which allowed the MP to sue *The Guardian* for libel.

Lord Hoffmann of Chedworth was born in 1934 to a Jewish family from Mulzenberg, near Cape Town. He went to Cape Town University, and then Oxford as a Rhodes scholar, where he got a first. He taught at Oxford before becoming a barrister and then one of the most sought-after silks, earning more than £500,000 a year by the Eighties.

He married Gillian Sterner, much in the news now because of her job with Amnesty International, and they live in a Georgian house in Hampstead, north London.

Lord Hoffmann has a busy and varied social life and has served on the board of English National Opera and on the Arts Council advisory committee on London. Among his other haunts was Stringfellows nightclub, which he began to visit after meeting Peter Stringfellow during a court case, and where he was photographed with Page 3 models.

Lord Hoffmann stopped going to Stringfellows after he was made the Lord Justice of Appeal in 1992 because of the possibility of adverse publicity. Some will say it is ironic that his present difficulties are the result of links with a far more venerable organisation.

KIM SENGUPTA

HOW THE SAGA UNFOLDED

16 October: General Augusto Pinochet arrested in London at a hospital.

22 October: Lawyers for the general mount a legal challenge to his arrest.

24 October: Chilean government formally asks Britain to free him.

28 October: The High Court - with the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham, sitting - rules that General Pinochet has immunity from prosecution.

3 November: Spanish judge Baltasar Garzon formally asks for General Pinochet's extradition on charges of human-rights abuse.

9 November: The International Commission of Jurists says that General Pinochet does have immunity from prosecution.

12 November: The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, has by now received extradition requests from France, Belgium and Switzerland as well as Spain.

25 November: The law lords rule 3-2 that General Pinochet does not have immunity from prosecution, with Lord Hoffmann casting the decisive final vote.

9 December: The Home Secretary gives authority to proceed for the Spanish extradition request.

10 December: General Pinochet's lawyers ask the law lords to set aside the earlier judgment because of Lord Hoffmann's links with Amnesty International.

11 December: General Pinochet appears at Belmarsh Magistrates' court, south London, and says he does not recognise the jurisdiction of any court other than Chile's.

17 December: The law lords overturn previous House of Lords ruling. New hearing set for January.

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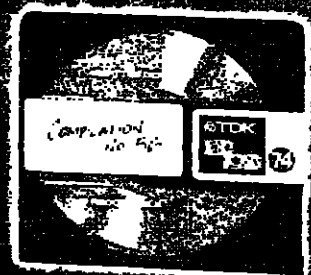
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Saudi nurses

THE SHERIFF of Manchester has ruled that Saudi nurses who were not given the right to work in the UK in March 1998 were not entitled to a cash award.

Go-ahead

A NEW INVESTMENT in the UK's biggest British vessel, the 168m-long *Britannia*, is set to go ahead.

Deadline

THE CHAIRMAN of the Croft next September to the train company and almost 150 workers.

Scientific

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STEVE R

It was a...
Cliff...
Sad...

IN THE FRIDAY

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الاصل

BBC names first female channel boss

BY PAUL MCCANN
Media Editor

THE BBC appointed the first woman to run a British television channel yesterday when it made Jane Root, who commissioned *The Cops* and *Dinnerladies*, to be the new controller of BBC 2.

Currently the executive in charge of independently made programmes at the BBC, Ms Root, 41, is part of a new generation which is taking over television.

Ms Root started off in television in the early Eighties when she made a media programme for Channel 4 called *Open The Box* with another young producer called Michael Jackson. Mr Jackson was controller of BBC 2 himself until May last year. He is now chief executive of Channel 4 and will be Ms Root's main rival.

Ms Root joins female executives such as Jana Bennett, director of production and Jenny Abramski, director of radio, at the top of the BBC. She said yesterday: "It might have been an astonishing thing to happen 10 years ago when the BBC was very male at the top, but now there are plenty of smart women around in senior positions."

"I am so excited to get the job that I'm not sure the fact I'm a woman is that important."

Just under 30 per cent of the BBC's senior executives are women, according to the BBC's annual report. Lower down the scale the proportion is slightly

TOP WOMEN AT THE BBC

Jana Bennett, director of production
Thought to have been in the running for the BBC 2 job, Jana Bennett is responsible for running one of the world's biggest television production companies, the bit of the BBC that makes programmes.

Jenny Abramski, director of radio
After a long career in BBC radio Jenny Abramski earned plaudits for successfully setting up Radio 5 Live as a rolling news and sport station. Before her promotion to takeover Matthew Bannister's job as director of radio, she set up News 24, the BBC's digital 24-hour news channel.

Patricia Hodgson, director of policy and planning
This job is central to the running of an organisation as large as the BBC and Patricia Hodgson has a seat on the executive committee which runs the entire corporation.

Sue Farr, marketing and communications director
Sue Farr has been responsible for the advertising campaigns and public relations of the broadcast arm, which includes the TV channels and the radio stations.

better: 33 per cent of its senior managers are women and 36 per cent of their middle managers and "senior professionals".

The BBC 2 top job has been seen as the proving ground for the BBC's most senior executives. Ms Root replaces Mark Thompson, who has been promoted to director of regions and nations, which is widely seen as putting him in position to bid for the role of director-general when Sir John Birt steps down in 2000.

"The good things is that BBC 2 is in such fantastic shape," Ms Root said yesterday. "The scary thing is that I've got to keep it fantastic. It would be a madwoman who said 'let's get rid of everything'. If you look at the top 10 ratings successes on

Ms Root has a strong production background, thanks to her years working in the world of independent production. Her company, Wall to Wall, made programmes such as *The Media Show*, which was presented by Muriel Grey, the drama *Plotlands* and the series on infants, *Baby It's You*.

Her first task when arriving at the BBC in 1997 was to persuade Tony Garnett's production company to make a third series of the cult hit *This Life*. When a third series could not be made to work, she instead had him make the drama *The Cops* which has been a ratings and critical success for BBC 2 on Monday nights.

Ms Root is part of a new generation that is taking control of the BBC and includes Peter Salmon, controller of BBC 1, and David Docherty, deputy director of television who all worked together in the Eighties and early Nineties.

Ms Root will report to Alan Yentob, director of television and a one-time controller of BBC 2 himself.



Jane Root celebrating her appointment as controller of BBC 2 with Alan Yentob, director of BBC television

Terrorism law will ban other violent groups

ANIMAL RIGHTS fanatics are to be included in sweeping new anti-terrorist powers announced by the Government yesterday.

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, unveiled a raft of measures to extend Northern Ireland's tough security laws to cover domestic and international terrorism.

Mr Straw published proposals to replace the temporary powers of the Prevention of Terrorism Act with permanent legislation aimed at combating the continuing threat from violent groups at home and abroad.

The new measures would allow for the first time the proscription of any organisation that used serious violence within the UK for "political, religious or ideological ends".

The new definition will also be flexible enough to cover terrorist use of technology and outlaw acts such as an attack on a key computer system.

The consultation paper makes it easier to seize cash and assets of individuals with suspected links to terror groups and allow civil forfeiture of homes and cars of such suspects.

Many of the proposals toughen up current legislation, but Mr Straw stressed that as the powers should be

BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

"proportionate" to the threat posed, he was changing security measures to encourage the peace process in Ulster.

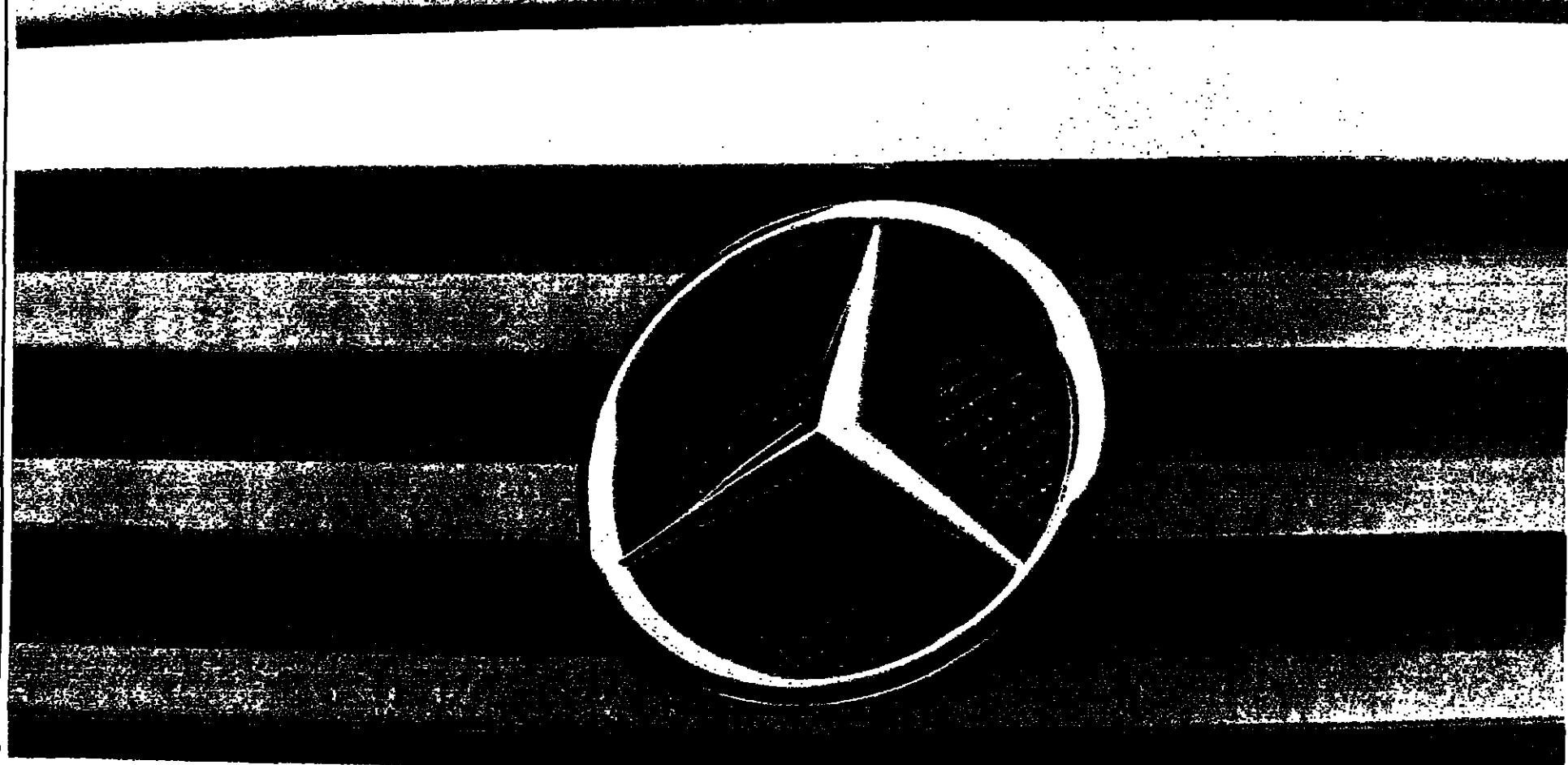
To meet the Government's pledges in the Good Friday Agreement, emergency powers specific to Northern Ireland will be abolished. It wants to phase out the widely-criticised Diplock Courts and end the use of exclusion orders.

Internment has been ruled out and audio-recording of interviews with suspects, currently not allowed in Northern Ireland, will be made mandatory for the whole of the UK.

Proscription or banning or terror groups would continue in the province. At the moment, Continuity IRA and Real IRA, believed to be responsible for the Omagh bomb, are proscribed.

The PTA's power to arrest, stop, search and detain suspects would be retained but the maximum 7-day period of detention could be reduced.

Applications for extending detention of suspects would be passed to judges rather than the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, as at present.



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IN BRIEF

Saudi nurse 'withdrew cash'
DUNDEE SHERIFF Court yesterday saw a video of Lucille McLachlan, the nurse freed by Saudi Arabia after being found guilty of accessory to murder, withdrawing money from a cash machine in March 1986 - about the time money went missing from the account of a patient in her care. Ms McLachlan denies stealing a cash card and using it to draw £1,960.

Go-ahead for 'Derbyshire' inquiry
A FULL new investigation is to be carried out into the sinking 18 years ago of the bulk carrier *Derbyshire*, the biggest British vessel ever to be lost at sea, the Government said. The 169,000-tonne ship went down with the loss of 42 British crew in a typhoon off Japan in 1980.

Deadline set for rail crash cases
THE CHAIRMAN of the adjourned Southall rail crash inquiry told the Crown Prosecution Service they have until next September to complete manslaughter cases against the train company and driver involved. Seven people died and almost 150 were injured in the accident.

Scientific advisers put to the test
THE GOVERNMENT is to review the way it collects data on biotechnology issues including cloning and genetically modified food. The inquiry will reassess the value of 15 scientific advisory bodies set up to deal with issues such as human embryology, pesticides and gene therapy.

STEVE RICHARDS



It will be easier to remove Clinton from office than Saddam Hussein

IN THE FRIDAY REVIEW PAGE 3

National tests criticised by schools chief

NATIONAL TESTS taken by nearly two million pupils each year are unreliable and vulnerable to cheating, according to Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools.

Ministers have made literacy and numeracy targets, measured by the tests, the centrepiece of their policy for raising standards.

But in remarks revealed today, Mr Woodhead argues that the tests are vague, unreliable and "administered creatively" by schools - a reference to allegations of cheating.

National tests that must be taken by all pupils at the ages of 7, 11 and 14 are used by the Government as a yardstick to judge schools. League tables for primary schools, to be published in February, are based on test results for 11-year-olds.

But a report in today's *Times Educational Supplement* discloses that Mr Woodhead told a seminar at the London School of Economics last week: "There are no reliable national curriculum tests."

"I have not got a lot of faith in them for three reasons. First, I am not sure the tests are the right tests. The concept of levels [broad measurements

By JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

of pupils' achievement is a very vague one. We need standardised tests in literacy and numeracy."

"Second the tests have changed quite significantly over recent years, so it is impossible to compare like with like. Third, a lot of individual tests are being administered in a creative way."

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which administers the tests, introduced new security measures this year after complaints about cheating last year. There were allegations that teachers opened test papers in advance and coached children, and that some pupils were given extra time.

This year, officials carried out spot-checks in 2,000 schools just before the tests in May but found only one case worth investigating.

Yesterday, the authority and the Government reaffirmed their faith in the tests. A statement from the authority said: "Successive governments have used the national tests as the most reliable way of measuring children's progress. The tests

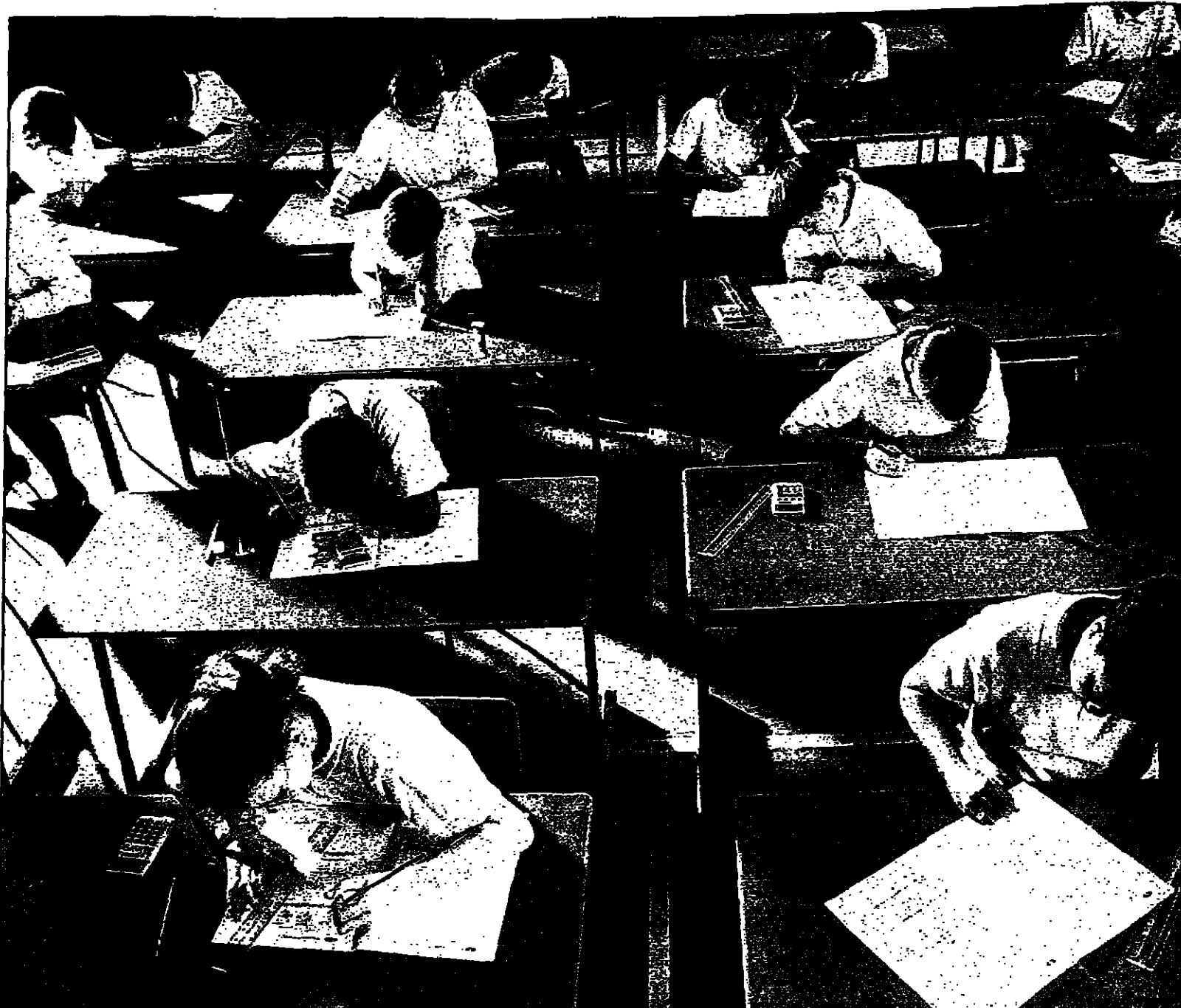
cannot be bettered as a way of giving teachers and parents information on progress."

A government source said: "We have strengthened the maths test this year by introducing a mental arithmetic test for the first time and we have also tightened up on security. National tests are the basis on which we are determined to make progress towards national targets."

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "For the Chief Inspector of Schools to cast doubt on the tests' validity and to imply that schools are cheating, seems to potentially undermine a central plank of the Government's standards agenda."

Peter Smith, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said: "It has taken a long time for Chris Woodhead to catch up with what teachers are saying about these tests. Does he accept that his inspectors should treat the results with great caution?"

A spokesman for Mr Woodhead's Office for Standards in Education said he had been speaking at a private seminar for academics about the reliability of data.



In their writing, boys tend to concentrate on action rather than description and prefer to be concise rather than offer an explanation Rex Features

Boys still failing to improve at English

BOYS' PERFORMANCE in national tests in English for 11-year-olds failed to improve this year, according to figures released yesterday.

A 2 per cent increase in the number achieving the expected standard was the result of a 4 per cent rise in girls' results.

At 14, almost three-quarters of girls reached the expected standard in English compared with 57 per cent of boys.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority said in its analysis of this year's English, maths and science test results for pupils aged 7, 11 and 14: "Raising boys' level of achievement remains an important objective."

In their writing, boys tend to concentrate on action rather than description and prefer to be concise rather than offering a full explanation, says the report. "Their achievements in these areas need to be recognised and built on while ex-

By JUDITH JUDD

tending their skills in the less favoured areas."

At 11, standards in writing for both boys and girls are lower than those in reading. At seven, spelling is a weakness. Spelling mistakes persist even at 14 with the brightest pupils making more errors than those achieving only the expected standard.

COMMON ERRORS

At seven: daisies for dances allow for although suddenly for suddenly

At 11: mosted for most existing for exciting none for known speshel for special invension for invention carriages for carriages

"Punctuation remains one of the weakest areas of writing," says the report.

In maths, results for both 11- and 14-year-olds were depressed because of the introduction of new mental arithmetic tests but there were improvements in performance on the written papers. At age seven, only 48 per cent of children were able to calculate the money left over from 54p after buying five pencils at 10p.

National tests are compulsory for children aged 7, 11 and 14, but next year 85 per cent of schools will also use tests produced by the authority for pupils aged 8, 9, and 10.

Nick Tate, the authority's chief executive, said: "The reports give a very detailed picture of children's performance in this year's national tests. This information will help teachers to discover how their pupils' performance relates to the national picture."

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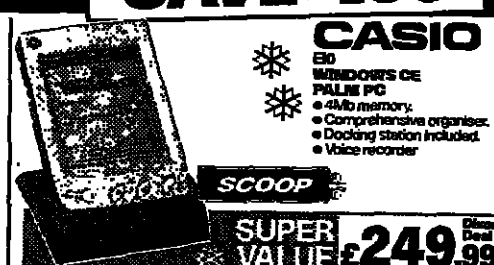


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Hyde Park 'bomber' wins appeal

AN IRISHMAN jailed as the "master bomb-maker" behind the 1982 Hyde Park bombing in central London that killed four soldiers had his conviction quashed yesterday.

But controversially the three Court of Appeal judges stressed that their ruling did not mean that Danny McNamee, who spent 11 years in jail, was innocent of the charge.

Mr McNamee, 38, from Crossmaglen, South Armagh, who was sentenced to 25 years for his alleged part in the bombing which killed four members of the Household Cavalry and seven horses, was the first person convicted of a terrorist offence in England to be freed early under the Good Friday Agreement.

Yesterday, the Court of Appeal ruled that his conviction for conspiracy to cause explosions was unsafe.

However, the judges also announced that it did "not at all follow" that he was innocent of the charge "or that he has served 11 years imprisonment for a crime which it has been found that he did not commit".

Lord Justice Swinton Thomas, sitting with Mr Justice Garland and Mr Justice Longmore, said that on the totality of the evidence against Mr McNamee, the prosecution had made out a "strong case" at his 1987 Old Bailey trial that he was guilty of conspiracy to cause explosions.

But the judges concluded that the conviction was unsafe because "we cannot be sure that the jury would have

BY JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

reached the conclusion that they were sure of guilt" if they had heard the fresh evidence raised during the recent appeal hearing.

The fresh material before the court had related to fingerprints that belonged to convicted bomb-maker Desmond Ellis, which Mr McNamee's lawyers said seriously undermined the Crown's case against their client.

After the court's ruling, Mr McNamee, surrounded by family and supporters said: "Of course I'm vindicated. It's proved I was not guilty, even in a really grudging way."

He said the judges had to be dragged kicking and screaming into delivering the ruling. "You would have thought they were interested in why the false case was brought, but the fact is they do not care," he said.

Hugging and kissing well-wishers he confirmed he would be seeking compensation for his time spent in jail. He added: "It was important to show what had been done. The prosecution had presented a completely false case against me."

In their 36-page written judgment, delivered following a 13-day hearing, the judges ruled that there had been a failure to disclose relevant evidence at Mr McNamee's trial and this amounted to a "material irregularity".

During the hearing, Mr McNamee's counsel, Michael

Mansfield QC, said that Desmond Ellis was the source of a "significant proportion" of the fingerprints found on bomb making devices.

Mr Mansfield revealed that circuit boards with identical "art-work" to those which had formed such a significant part of the case against Mr McNamee had been found in the possession of Ellis in 1981, but had not been disclosed at the trial.

Lord Justice Swinton Thomas said that the court had not given a ruling on whether vital information had been deliberately withheld from the original trial.



Danny McNamee, cleared yesterday of the Hyde Park bombing in 1982 that left four cavalymen and seven horses dead

P4

Haughey £2m tax concession is condemned

IRELAND'S CENTRE and left opposition parties yesterday united in their condemnation of the unexplained reduction of a £2m tax assessment to zero against former Taoiseach Charles Haughey.

The Dail held a special debate following the revelation that tax commissioner Ronan Kelly, the brother-in-law of current Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, had made the tax ruling, despite a judicial tribunal's finding that Mr Haughey had received gifts of at least £1.3m from businessman Ben Dunne.

The Labour leader Ruairi Quinn said ordinary taxpayers feel "fooled and duped", while the Democratic Left party's finance spokesman Pat Rabbitte said that, given the "cavalier fashion" finance minister Charles McCreedy had dismissed the affair, "I suppose we should be thankful Mr Haughey didn't ask for a rebate."

Mr Rabbitte added, "when Mr Haughey paraded his retinue like an Arab sheikh around this country for so many years, the Revenue Commissioners

BY ALAN MURDOCH
in Dublin

could never see anything wrong with it. It never occurred to them to ask any questions."

John Gormley of the Green Party said people seeing Mr Haughey's portrait in the Dail "invariably ask the question 'what is it doing there?' Charles J Haughey looks down at us with that imperious stare, and what does it say? It says 'you are mere minions. I am above you. I am above the law. Well let the message go out today, your day will come.'"

In response, Mr Ahern said he had had no contact with Mr Kelly, about the Haughey case and he rejected any suggestion that his brother-in-law had acted with anything other than "professional integrity".

Mr Ahern said "The decision came as a complete surprise to me, as it did to everyone. I have no insight into either the details of this case or of the decision."

Revenue Commissioners are expected to appeal against the decision in the courts.

VIAGRA CORNER

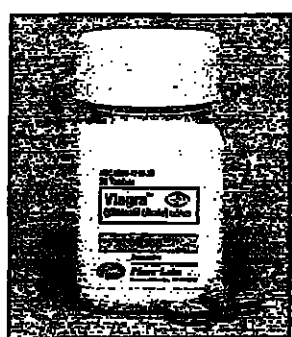
DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONTIERS
OF MEDICINE

FAMILY DOCTORS will be advised to carry on prescribing Viagra on the NHS by their professional body if Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, fails to lift a ban on the anti-impotence drug within a month.

Following fears that the NHS would not be able to afford to meet demand for the drug, ministers ordered doctors in September to stop prescribing the drug on the NHS.

The British Medical Association's GP committee decided last night to give Mr Dobson a month in which to produce new advice, or they will issue their own guidance to GPs to carry on prescribing Viagra on the NHS.

The BMA is concerned that the ban, imposed by Mr Dobson on 14 September, breaks GPs' terms of contract to provide care on the NHS.



"We discussed issuing advice today but we gave Mr Dobson another month. Our advice is to ignore the Government's guidance and to carry on prescribing Viagra where clinically appropriate," said a BMA source.

The Department of Health expects to release fresh guidance in January which is likely to allow GPs to carry on prescribing.

COLIN BROWN

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AT CINEMAS EVERYWHERE FROM TODAY

Opera House gets grant rise to £16m

THE ROYAL Opera House is to become far and away the most lavishly funded arts venue in Britain after a major rise in its grant was announced yesterday.

In return, the ROH has agreed a deal under which it will reduce seat prices and increase public access.

The radical new arts budget announced by the Arts Council chairman, Gerry Robinson, also includes rewarding the National Theatre for excellence with a 9 per cent or £1m rise, and giving similar uplifts for quality to the Birmingham, London, and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestras.

But the Royal Shakespeare Company, which has followed government and Arts Council wishes by doing far more work in the regions, is punished with only a 5 per cent grant increase.

Mr Robinson said the RSC

By DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

needed help and had problems: "We will be meeting in the new year to talk about it. Their problems are substantial and not even an increase of 10 per cent would have been enough to sort them out." He added that the RSC had "tried to do too much".

An RSC spokesman said: "We will not be able to balance the budgets in the year 1999-2000 on this grant increase. Our problem has been that our grant has been eroded by 15 per cent over the past five years."

The key message in the overall grants announcement is that the days of across the board increases of the same percentage are over. Organisations deemed to be performing well are being rewarded with large increases.

Those thought to be doing badly get the minimum.

The exception is the Royal Opera House which, as expected, gets a massive increase to put its house in order, though less than the doubling of its grant that its chairman Sir Colin Southgate originally demanded.

Covent Garden's grant will be lifted by 11% to £16 million in 1999 and then up to £20 million in the two subsequent years. The Covent Garden site is being rebuilt at a cost of £218 million, £78 million of which comes from National Lottery funds.

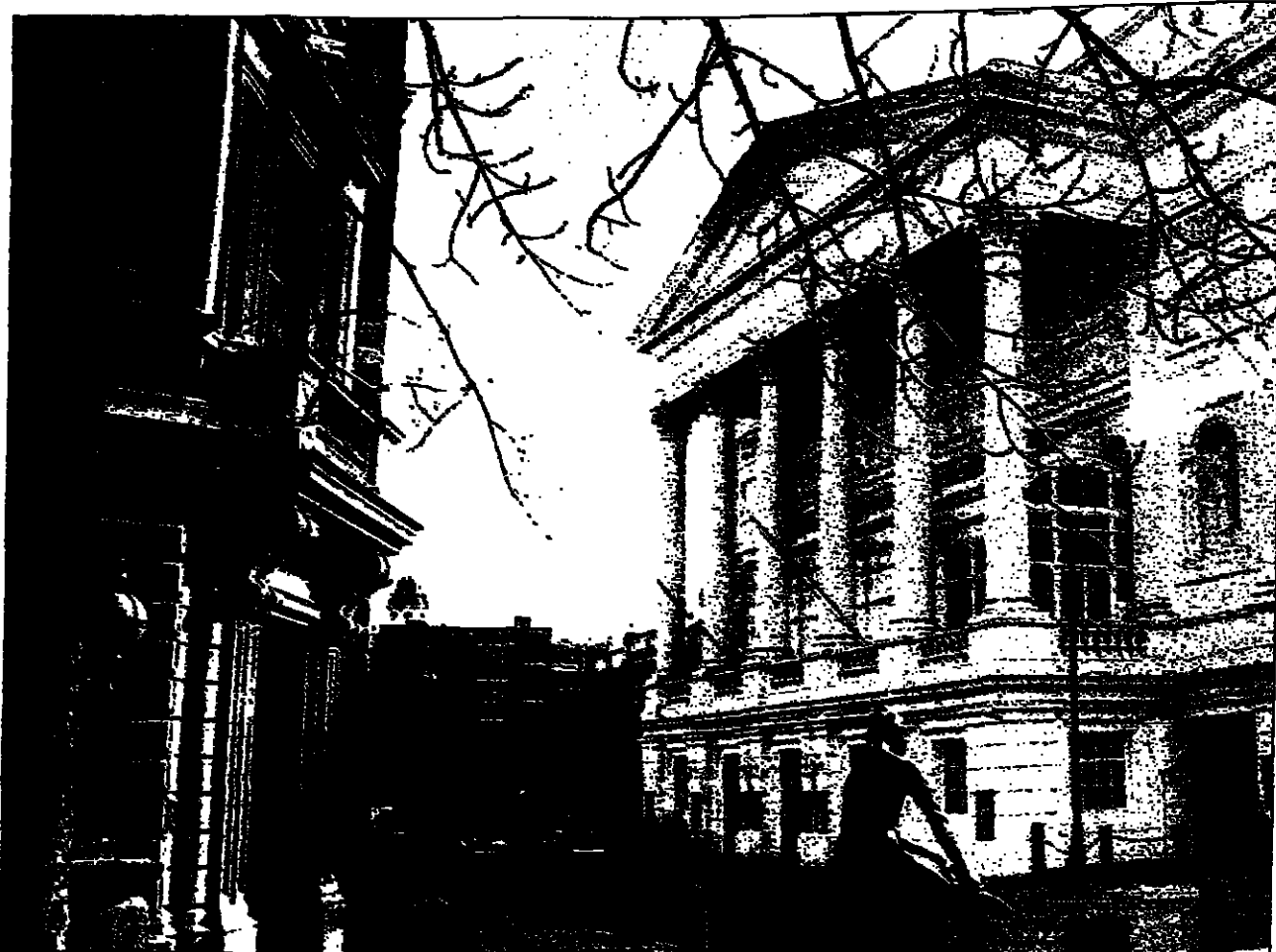
But a cash crisis in funding day-to-day activities means the Opera House will virtually close throughout next year. Mr Robinson said the cash was being awarded primarily to support the production of world class ballet and opera.

The 'strings' are that the building is opened up to a wider audience; ticket prices are brought down, and the educational programme is enhanced. No money would be released until the Arts Council was satisfied with the plans.

Yesterday's grants decisions were condemned by the Independent Theatre Council which represents 80 per cent of the touring drama companies funded by the Arts Council.

ITC director Nicola Thorold said that only standstill funding had been given to all the black and Asian companies and half of the specialist educational companies. She said it was "indefensible".

Mr Robinson also indicated a rift between him and Culture Secretary Chris Smith over the latter's decision to form an efficiency squad in the Culture Department.



The Royal Opera House's Covent Garden site is being rebuilt at a cost of £218 million, £78 million of which is lottery money
Brian Harris

Monsanto to be prosecuted over crops

MONSANTO, THE multinational chemicals company, is to be prosecuted for allegedly breaching the rules on the growth of genetically modified crops. It is the first prosecution of its kind.

The Health and Safety Executive yesterday said that it is prosecuting both Monsanto and an agricultural seed company, Perryfields Holdings, over their failure to comply with regulations designed to control the spread of pollen from modified crops.

Details of the alleged incident appeared this summer in the minutes of the government's Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment. Members of the committee found that herbicide-resistant oilseed rape was growing too close to neighbouring crops.

The minutes stated: "It was found that the pollen barrier surrounding the trial ... was only two metres wide on the site of the trial, rather than the required six metres. The trial ... had already flowered and pollination with the surrounding crop may have taken place."

The HSE said Monsanto and Perryfields Holdings allegedly failed to comply with one of the conditions agreed under the Environmental Protection Act by which the companies were permitted to grow modified oilseed rape at a site in Lincolnshire.

By STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

Caistor Magistrates Court in Lincolnshire is to hear the case next month and, if found guilty, Monsanto faces a fine of up to £20,000, or an unlimited fine if the case goes to a Crown Court.

Monsanto yesterday said it regretted the breach of consent and that it had taken immediate steps to limit any potential environmental impact.

The company said that the subcontractors appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to run the trial had confirmed in writing that the trial complied with all relevant requirements.

"One of these requirements was that the site should be surrounded by a six metre pollen border. The border was in place at the beginning of the trial, but part of it was later mown in error by one of the contractors," Monsanto said.

The company subsequently destroyed the entire crop of modified oilseed rape.

Adrian Benn, a campaigner with Friends of the Earth, said biotechnology companies have been breaking the law at test sites and putting the countryside at risk. "It is ironic that the government is also trying to reach voluntary agreements with the very same companies they are prosecuting," he said.

Cervical cancer 50% higher if no screening

THE CERVICAL cancer screening programme stops up to 3,900 incidences of the disease every year and cancer rates would be at least 50 per cent higher without it, its 10 year review said yesterday.

But it admitted that "serious, if isolated problems" have dogged the service and women must realise that no test could ever be 100 per cent accurate in diagnosing cervical cancer.

Launching the review, the Health minister, Baroness Hayman, compared the smear test to wearing a seatbelt - not a guarantee against dying but something that greatly reduces the risk of doing so.

The programme review shows that the death rate from cervical cancer is falling by 7 per cent each year. In 1997 it was 3.7 per 100,000 women compared with 7 per 100,000 in 1979. The rates of cancer would be at least 50 per cent greater if there was no screening problem and attendance for regular screening prevents up to 90 per cent of cervical cancer.

By GLENDA COOPER
Social Affairs Correspondent

Around 85 per cent of all women attend screenings, up from over 20 per cent in 1987/8 when the programme began. Around 4.5 million smears are examined every year.

"We are not going to pretend we haven't had problems," said Julietta Patnick, national co-ordinator of the NHS Cervical Screening Programme.

"But what you see here is a very successful programme, a falling number of cases, a falling number of deaths, a reversal of trends."

Baroness Hayman said the Government had been responsible for a radical shake-up which would result in improvements in training staff and reporting back.

"Every woman would like a guarantee of health from the results but that is not possible," she said. "As the report suggests, screening can greatly reduce the risk but never eliminate it completely."

ROBERT FISK



If inspectors couldn't find the weapons, how come we knew where to fire?

IN THE FRIDAY REVIEW PAGE 5

Banana 'fled death plot' in Zimbabwe

BY MARY BRADD

CANAAN BANANA, Zimbabwe's former president, has alleged that he jumped bail shortly before his conviction for sodomy last month because members of the Zimbabwean government planned to kill him.

In the latest twist in a bizarre saga, Mr Banana, convicted of 11 counts of sodomy, attempted sodomy and indecent assault, told the independent *Zimbabwean Financial Gazette* that he fled to South Africa last month because of plans to eliminate him. He said he had "dangerous information" which he wanted to share with his real friends.

It was unclear yesterday whether South Africa had handed Mr Banana to Zimbabwe under an extradition treaty between the two countries. Mr Banana may have returned home voluntarily. But yesterday he was under house arrest, until sentencing on 23 December.



His stay in South Africa and a decision by President Nelson Mandela to see him placed great strain on already tense political relations between the two countries.

Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe and Mr Mandela have been at loggerheads over Zimbabwe's decision to send troops into Congo in defence of President Laurent Kabila. But domestic attitudes

to homosexuality also divide the two countries. In Zimbabwe, where homosexuality is banned, Mr Mugabe has described gays as "lower than pigs", whereas South Africa protects gay rights under its new constitution.

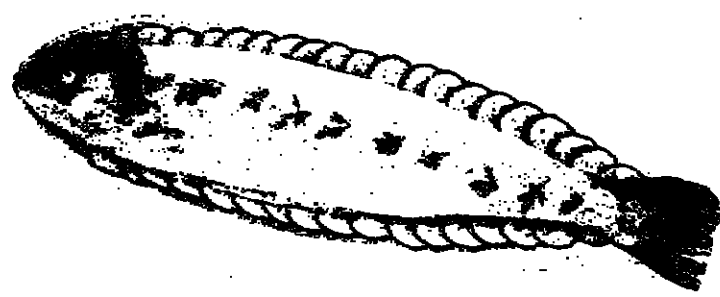
Not that Mr Banana, a Methodist minister, was looking for a gay support group to take up his case. He has always denied the charges against him, claiming they were trumped up by political enemies.

The charges proved against him carry a jail sentence of up to 22 years. However, there is speculation that he will receive a light sentence, or even a pardon, after Mr Mandela revealed that he and Mr Mugabe had reached a "common position" on Mr Banana.

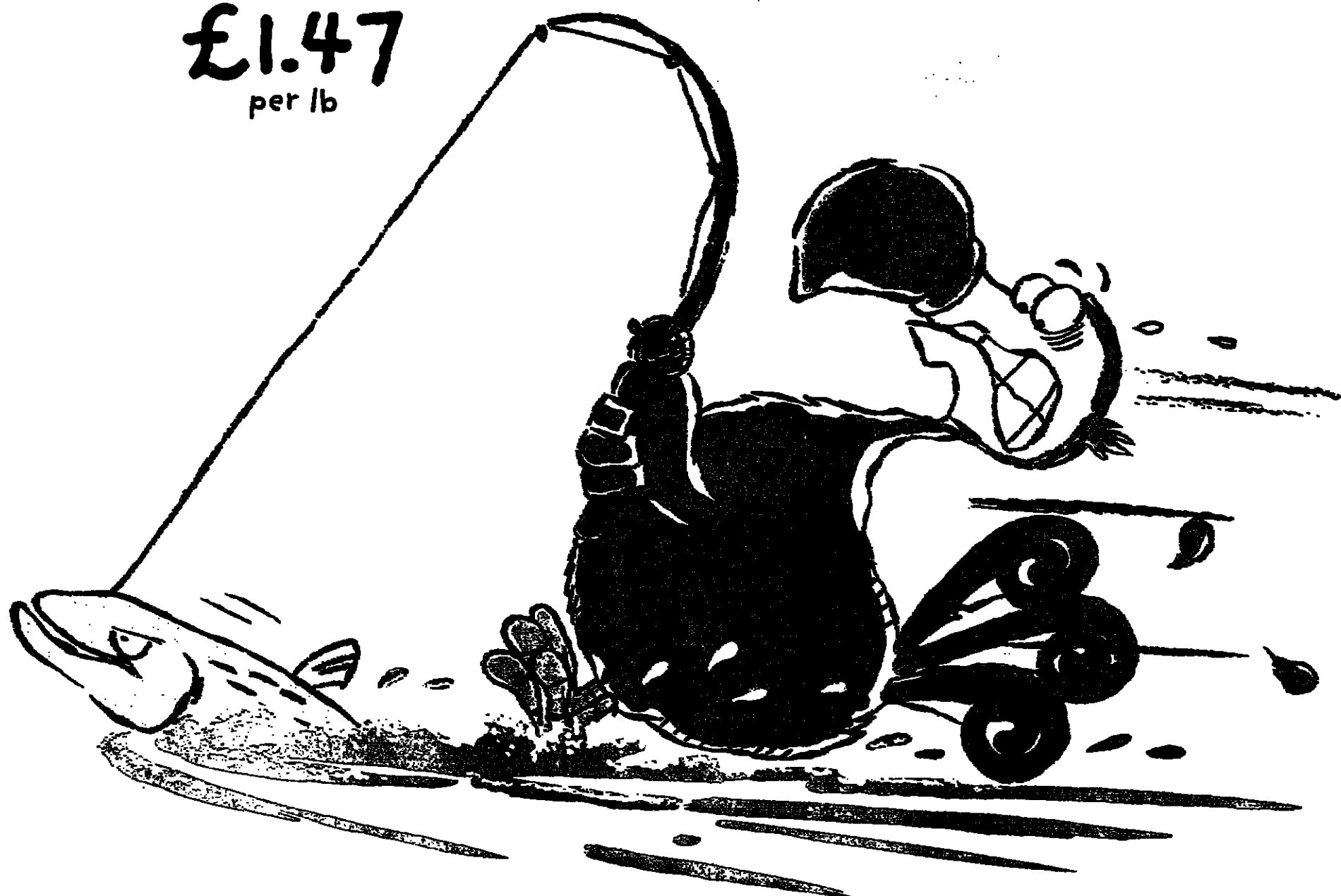
During his 17-day trial one of Mr Banana's alleged victims described how the former president had danced with him before drugging him and raping him on a carpet in the State House library.



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Israelis favour outsider for PM

BY ERIC SILVER
in Jerusalem

ISRAEL'S ELECTION campaign opened yesterday with a dark horse, who has not yet entered the race or named his colours, leading the field

In a Gallup poll, taken immediately after the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, announced his decision to go to the country next spring, Amnon Shahak, who retired earlier this year as army chief of staff, was 11 per cent clear in a straight contest with Mr Netanyahu. The right-wing leader of Likud polled 37 per cent to 48 per cent for Mr Shahak.

The survey is bad news for the Labour opposition contender, Ehud Barak. He led Mr Netanyahu by only three points (44 to 41) in single combat. When voters were offered a choice of all three, 36 per cent backed Mr Netanyahu, 27 per cent Mr Barak and 25 per cent Mr Shahak. If that were the result in a three-way contest on polling day, the vote for prime minister would go to a second round with the third candidate eliminated.

Mr Shahak's main claim to the voters' affection is that he is neither Mr Netanyahu nor Mr Barak, two abrasive personalities whose arrogant, dictatorial ways have a habit of losing friends and alienating people.

By contrast, Mr Shahab, who fought in an elite commando unit alongside both his rivals, is genial and articulate with a reputation for quiet efficiency. Like Mr Barak, he is identified with the liberal left, but so far he has declined all invitations to join his old comrade and commander as number two on the Labour slate.

After years of marching one step behind Mr Barak, he wants to be his own man. Although he is still officially on demobilisation leave from the army, he opened a campaign



Amnon Shahak: Efficient, genial and articulate

office in Tel Aviv this week and is expected to resign his commission soon and announce his candidacy for prime minister at the head of a new centre party.

Leah Rabin, widow of the former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, is putting her weight behind efforts to bring Mr Shahak into the Barak camp. Both men were protégés, in the army and in their political aspirations, of the assassinated Labour premier. Mr Barak still hopes to win him over.

One of the Labour leader's senior aides said yesterday: "We are not going to plead with Shabak. He knows we'll be glad if he joins us. He knows if he does, he'll probably get the defence portfolio. He has said he is only going into politics to get rid of Netanyahu. Our message to him is that the only way to do that is to fight together, not to fight each other."

Mr Netanyahu was elected in 1996 on a platform at odds with the land-for-peace formula that Labour endorsed in its landmark 1993 Oslo accord with the Palestinians. He has seen his coalition crumble since October when he signed the Wye Agreement which included a deal on withdrawing from part of the Occupied Territories.

IN BRIEF

German eagle lands on Reichstag

AN EAGLE, the symbol of Germany, was installed on top of the Reichstag in Berlin yesterday. The parliament's president, Wolfgang Thierse, oversaw the unveiling of the two-and-a-half ton aluminum bird. At 26ft by 21ft, the eagle is 60 per cent bigger than its counterpart in Bonn.

National Front MEPs back Le Pen

NINE of the French National Front's 12 MEPs pledged to continue backing the leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, who has been undermined by a power struggle that has split his far-right party. The nine said in a statement that the three others, including the Front's rebel deputy leader, Bruno Mégret, no longer represented the Front in Strasbourg.

Suicide over Christmas tree

A 50-YEAR-OLD Romanian man killed himself because he could not afford a Christmas tree for his 10-year-old daughter. Christmas trees in Romania cost between £3 and £12. As average monthly salaries are about £6, only about one in 10 Romanians can afford them.

هكذا من الاصل

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China's 20-year affair with capitalism

TWENTY YEARS ago, Li Yan was a fresh-faced schoolgirl well-drilled in Maoist propaganda. "At school we were told two-thirds of the world's population was still suffering and miserable, and that we Chinese were working to stop their suffering." She laughs, incredulous at the memory.

Now 32, Ms Li works in the central city of Chongqing for a local branch of a Western multinational, having abandoned her poorly paid local-government job. Dressed in a Western business suit, she is a thoroughbred product of the reform era, fluent in English, and enthusiastic about China's October signing of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

"It is really good that something is being done on human rights. I think this is really important, if the government can open up." She is, in short, the sort of mainland Chinese who would have been unimaginable two decades ago.

Today, China celebrates the 20th anniversary of the start of its reform process. On 18 December 1978, after two years of political manoeuvring, Deng Xiaoping convened a critical party conclave where he finally routed the diehard Maoists and set China on the road to the market.

The process has transformed the lives of China's vast population, now 1.3 billion.

Chinese Communist propaganda routinely describes the progress of the past two decades as "miraculous", but Deng's main achievement was to restore the possibility of normality in a country ravaged by the economic and human tragedy of the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution.

In a keynote speech marking the occasion today, President Jiang Zemin will dwell on the benefits of reform, many of which are undeniable. To quote just one statistic popular in the blizzard of propaganda running up to the anniversary: In 1980, fewer than 1 per cent of households owned televisions. By last year, there were 100.5 sets per 100 homes.

But away from their televisions, ordinary Chinese have less to celebrate. As China heads for the 21st century, its economy has slowed amid the Asian financial crisis, and long-postponed structural reforms have yet to be accomplished. State enterprises continue to drain the public account, with nearly half of them in the red; much of the state-run banking sector is insolvent; and none of these problems can be addressed without throwing yet more millions out of work.

Rampant corruption undermines the best attempts of the central government to tackle the debris of the command economy.

Most sensitive is the unresolved question of whether the next, much more difficult, economic reforms can take place without a parallel political opening. Liu Ji, a former vice-president of the Chinese Academy of Social Science, wrote in

By TERESA POOLE
in Peking

a mainland newspaper this week: "To transform China into a modernised country, we must take the next step, which is political reform ... China has made some progress in political reform, but so far its pace has somehow lagged behind that of the economic reform."

To dampen expectations of anyone reading this unusually bold view, he added that "the establishment of socialist democracy will take generations".

In the meantime, yesterday brought a sharp reminder of what still remains from the era when a population lived in fear of an unexpected knock on the door. Two high-profile dissidents went on trial for "inciting the subversion of state power", part of an aggressive crackdown on activists who have tried to register their China Democracy Party.

In the eastern city of Hangzhou, 200 people defied bans and gathered outside the courtroom to show support for 32-year-old Wang Youcai. One woman carried a banner with the Chinese characters reading "protest". In the city of Wuhan, two supporters were detained as Qin Yongmin, 49, went on trial.

In many ways, human rights in China have improved over the past 20 years, but only for those who do not question the Communist Party's monopoly of power. Personal freedoms—to choose a job, move around the country, or even divorce—are taken for granted. But life remains a complicated struggle for Mao's "masses", because of the yawning chasm between the upbeat official version of market reform and reality.

Take the peasants of Persimmon village, on the outskirts of Chongqing city, past the "California Garden Bowling Centre". Pang Lianghui, 41, recalled the late 1970s. "We were employed by the commune, and we earned work points according to how long we worked in the fields. Farm production was not enough, so we ate weeds. That was common, as were deaths due to malnutrition."

Deng's return of farming plots to individual families transformed Persimmon village's economy and living standards soared.

Now, however, comes the challenge of market forces. The local township has requisitioned the peasants' land to build apartment blocks for Chongqing's overspill. The cadres have offered compensation and replacement housing. But many villagers worry whether the money will ever be paid, and have no idea how they will earn a living without land when the cash runs out. "After the property development, our living standards will fall back to 20 years ago," said one man.

In another world, on the pavements of Peking, is a different kind of loser. Wang Yongli, 38, described how he had been laid off 18 months ago in

the north-east rustbelt city of Harbin from his job in an over-manned state grain-storage depot. "There are no jobs in Harbin," he said.

So earlier this year, Mr Wang said goodbye to his family and journeyed to the capital, where he joined the army of unemployed who illegally hawk goods on the pavements. He sells scarves for 10 yuan each (75p). In between police swoops, he needs to sell 10 a day to make a subsistence living.

There are already more than 10 million urban unemployed in China who are trying to eke out an existence in this way, and the number is going to rise steadily.

As China marks today's milestone, it can claim that everyone benefited from the first phase of economic reform, though to greatly differing degrees. The Communist Party's challenge for the next decade is how to manage a society in wrenching transition, where there will be a large number of losers who now want the freedom to complain.



Two Chinese bikers wearing the latest US styles in Canton; but Western fashion cannot help those impoverished after 20 years of reform. Rex

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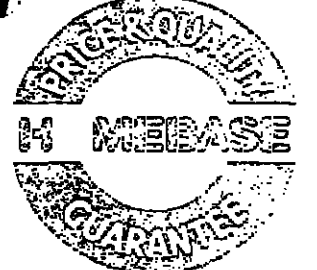
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Protesters shot in Jakarta riots

RIOT SQUADS fired shots and tear gas when thousands of student demonstrators demanding democratic reform tried to storm the Indonesian parliament building yesterday.

One student was shot dead and 10 others had gunshot wounds, an official at Jakarta's navy hospital said. Another 60 were reported injured at three other hospitals, he said. Most were beaten or overcome by tear gas.

Many of the more than 4,000 protesters threw rocks, bottles and petrol bombs at police and troops who beat them back with clubs. The military said four security officers were seriously injured.

Some heavily bleeding students were carried to safety by their friends through clouds of tear gas. Paramedics applied first aid on the street to dozens of other demonstrators.

Students fought back against the security forces with sticks, and some soldiers hurled rocks at protesters.

By GEOFF SPENCER
in Jakarta

It was the second day that students clashed with security forces and the worst violence since 13 November, when 14 died after troops fired on students who tried to march on the parliament building.

The single reported death happened despite assurances by the military that troops and police had been issued with plastic or blank ammunition.

Hours before the street battle, President BJ Habibie warned that Indonesia might break up if the protests escalated.

"If the protests are not controlled it can lead to the disintegration of the nation," he said at a graduation ceremony of new army officers.

For weeks, students have taken to the streets demanding that President Habibie force the military out of politics and put his predecessor, Suharto, on trial for corruption. (AP)

PHILIP HENSHER



I suppose putting a man on the Moon was interesting, but is Mother Teresa?

Poor country with a taste for fast cars

EUROPEAN TIMES
DURRES, ALBANIA

HIS NAME is Urim and he can offer you a red £25,000 Mercedes, less than one year old, for £5,000. Or perhaps you would prefer a classier metallic green model, £40,000 in the UK. Yours for £8,000.

Urim has lots of other Mercedes, plus the odd BMW and Toyota, all at temptingly low prices. Snag is the cars are all stolen from the wealthier parts of Europe – and they can only be bought and driven in Albania.

Urim is one of the handful of shady salesmen whose showroom is a bumpy field outside the Albanian port of Durres. They have more than 100 stolen cars for sale and most of them are Mercedes, polished to a mirror-shine by young boys while would-be buyers haggle over prices.

Albania may be Europe's poorest country, plagued by a daily round of murders and power cuts, but it is also the Mercedes capital of the world, home to more of the prestigious German cars per capita than Germany itself.

Three out of every five cars in Albania are "Merces", some

of them powerful and expensive models, others battered and rusting. Dealers are reluctant to open up shop in Albania, so spare parts are hard to come by. Most are sold at roadside stalls, and they have usually been stolen from other Mercedes.

In the capital Tirana, the Mercedes is the favourite taxi, the preferred family car and the supreme status symbol. But at least 80 per cent are stolen, often to order, by ruthless and highly organised professional gangs, linked to Albania's growing drugs and arms trades, according to police. Major hire-car companies have pulled out of Albania because their cars were all stolen by thieves with false ID and cloned credit cards.

The evidence is in the statistics: the number of cars in Albania has soared since the collapse of Communism, from 5,000 in the early Nineties, to 500,000 today. Yet last year only three new cars were registered, down even on the paltry 99 the year before that, according to official figures.

Everybody knows the cars are stolen but nobody seems to care. "In Albania you're a mug if you buy a Mercedes legally," said Urim, giving the green Mercedes' bonnet an affectionate pat.

Many of the Mercedes still have the D (for Deutschland) or CH (Switzerland) sticker on the back, denoting the real owner's nationality. The new owners soon add AL stickers, often without even bothering to remove the other labels.

Such impunity goes unpunished. The police turn a blind eye and some are involved in the trade. Customs officials are urged to be vigilant when the cars are brought in, but they are easily bribed or intimidated by criminals.

The newly elected Socialist government has shown little more desire than its predecessor to halt the wholesale import of stolen cars. Some MPs even claim that the growth in Mercedes ownership is a barometer of the nation's prosperity and therefore of the government's success.

The cars, often with very



Donkeys and carts are being driven off the road in Albania by Mercedes – many stolen elsewhere in Europe

Arben Cel/Reuters

few miles on the clock, are usually taken from German cities such as Frankfurt, Munich and Bonn but also from Switzerland, Italy and Greece. British cars are targeted less because they are right-hand drive but there are prestigious exceptions: two years ago a stolen British-owned gold-coloured Rolls-Royce was spotted being driven into Albania from the Greek border,

after the customs officers had been paid off.

Britain plays another role too: thousands of cars stolen on the Continent are taken to British container ports to create a complicated paper trail to disguise their route to Albania and other Eastern European countries.

The cars from Western Europe are usually stolen at night and have reached Slovenia by

the time their owners have discovered the theft. From there they are driven to the Croatian port of Rijeka and on to the ferry to Durres. Croatian customs and police order a few cars off the ferries but most are allowed to continue to Albania.

Once in Albania the cars are virtually untouchable. Out of 110,000 cars stolen in Germany last year, some 43,000 remain untraced. "We know a

lot of them are in Albania," said a German federal police spokesman in Wiesbaden. "But without the co-operation of the Albanian authorities we cannot just go in and get them. It would be too difficult and too dangerous."

Taking the cars back out of Albania is more difficult since it involves the risk that European Union customs officials might check their databases of

stolen cars. It can also be embarrassing. The Albanian central bank's former governor, Mr Hoti, took his official Mercedes to Italy only to be told by Italian police, who checked their computer records, that it was on the stolen list. The car was confiscated but was later returned to the governor, apparently because the owner could not be traced.

DAVID HARRISON

MEPs reject budget after fraud row

EURO MPS yesterday delivered a humiliating rebuff to the European Commission, refusing to approve a set of annual accounts and paving the way for a vote next month on whether to sack all 20 commissioners.

The unexpected act of militancy came after months of tension over accusations of fraud and mismanagement in the Commission's multi-million pound annual budget.

The vote, in which MEPs

BY STEPHEN CASTLE
in Brussels

refused to sign off a set of EU accounts dating from 1996, has no effect on the Commission's day-to-day finances, and the motion, which would lead to the resignation of the commissioners, is unlikely to achieve the necessary two-thirds majority. Nevertheless, yesterday's vote was a blow to the prestige of the Commission

and its president, Jacques Santer. In all, 270 of the 518 present voted to withhold approval of the accounts against 225 and 23 abstentions.

The censure motion will be debated in January at the request of Pauline Green, leader of the socialist group, the majority of whose members wanted to agree the accounts.

She argued that failure to rubber-stamp the budget amounted to a vote of no-

confidence in the Commission, and that a censure motion was needed to clear the air. Most socialists, including Ms Green, will back the Commission.

All seven previous attempts to censure the European Commission, the last in 1991, have been defeated or withdrawn.

Edward McMillan-Scott, leader of the Conservative MEPs who argued against approval of the accounts, said: "This was the strongest con-

demnation of the European Commission since I was elected in 1984. I believe specific commissioners should consider their positions following the vote."

Parliamentarians have complained that the Commission has not gone far enough to guarantee regular fraud reports, to keep national justice officials informed of investigations or to create an independent anti-fraud office.

Relic's guards grilled

MAGISTRATES inquiring into the activities of the Archbishop of Naples were yesterday reported to have widened their investigation to take in the protectors of the city's hugely popular patron saint, San Gennaro.

Each year, thousands of Catholics fill Naples cathedral awaiting the liquefaction of the saint's blood, preserved in a vial. The failure of the blood to liquefy is seen as a bad omen and has preceded such events as

BY FRANCES KENNEDY
in Rome

the tragic earthquake of 1980.

Police searched the archbishop's offices yesterday in the presence of the archbishop's lawyer. Sources close to local magistrates said the investigation concerned claims of tax evasion and false accounting and involved other officials, including the local director of the charity Caritas.

The investigation is now reported also to include the Deputazione di San Gennaro, a committee of lay people who oversee the maintenance of San Gennaro's chapel and the management of the saint's real estate, much of it bequeathed by donors in their wills.

The archbishop Michele Giordano, is under investigation by prosecutors in Lagonegro, Basilicata, inquiring into a usury racket.

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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

OECD warns on growth
ANOTHER stock market tumble on the scale of the world-wide slide in August and September could knock 0.75 percentage point or more off annual growth in industrialised countries, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development said yesterday.
The OECD, which believes the risk of a renewed decline in equity prices is considerable, estimated that a 20 per cent fall across the Group of Seven biggest national economies could take one percentage point or more off US growth. It warned risks of this were possibly stronger now than when it flagged the issue a month ago in the preliminary version of its Economic Outlook, which was published in the final version yesterday.
The impact in the other leading economies would be somewhat smaller, with the UK seen as withstanding the effects of a worldwide equity slump for the first 12 months, although if G7 equity markets fell by 20 per cent it could wipe almost 1 per cent off UK growth within two years.

Arriva names new chief
ARRIVA, the UK's third largest bus operator, has appointed Bob Davies as its chief executive. Mr Davies, who was chief executive of Eastern Electricity until its recent acquisition by PowerGen, will replace Gordon Hughes, who retires on 30 December.
The appointment of Mr Davies, 50, follows pressure from institutional shareholders that the company should move as quickly as possible to name a replacement for Hodgson, who said in July that he would step down. Arriva, the former Cowie, issued warnings earlier this year that profits would fall short of expectations.
Mr Davies was chief executive of East Midlands Electricity until it was acquired by PowerGen earlier this year. He joined East Midlands in 1994 as group finance director.
Previously, he had spent 15 years at Ford Motor and its credit unit in the UK, Spain and the US.

Euro confuses consumers
WITH the launch of the European single currency just a few weeks away, many European consumers are still confused about the value of the euro. According to a survey by European Insight, the consultants, French and Italian consumers found it particularly difficult to convert correctly their local currency into the euro.

STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yr Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5685.20	54.80	0.97	6183.70	4599.20	3.31
FTSE 250	4695.90	6.30	0.13	5970.90	4247.60	4.92
FTSE 350	2679.90	22.40	0.84	2969.10	2210.40	3.52
FTSE All Share	2895.21	30.67	0.81	2896.52	2143.53	3.60
FTSE SmallCap	3012.10	2.00	0.10	2793.80	1834.40	4.18
FTSE Fledgling	1720.10	-1.00	-0.09	1517.10	1046.20	0.00
FTSE AIM	795.20	0.30	0.04	1146.90	761.30	0.00
FTSE EBL00 100	941.17	10.12	1.09			
Dow Jones	8871.45	88.05	1.00	9380.20	7400.30	1.69
Nikkei	14126.99	30.69	0.22	17352.95	12787.90	1.04
Hang Seng	10083.31	143.92	1.45	11926.16	6544.79	3.02
Dax	4723.81	60.36	1.29	6217.83	3833.71	1.88

INTEREST RATES

Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	10 year	15 year	30 year	Yr Yld
UK	5.37	-1.37	5.71	-2.04	4.46	-1.86	-1.99
US	5.22	-0.69	4.98	-1.05	4.60	5.02	
Japan	0.50	-0.25	0.33	-0.21	1.30	-0.47	-0.37
Germany	3.32	-0.43	3.19	-0.85	3.87	-1.45	4.72

CURRENCIES

Index	Close	Change	Yr Ago
Dollar	1.6794	-0.09c	1.6451
D-Mark	2.7820	-0.22pf	2.9743
Yen	194.85	+11.17	215.94
S index	100.50	0.00	103.10
S index	104.70	+0.00	107.60

OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Chg	Yr Ago
Brent Oil (\$)	10.35	-0.51	16.70
Gold (\$)	291.85	-3.90	288.15
Silver (\$)	5.02	0.07	5.85
GDP	115.40	3.00	112.04
RPI	164.40	3.00	159.61
Base Rates	6.25	7.25	

TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate
Australia (\$)	2.6015
Austria (schillings)	19.02
Belgium (francs)	55.88
Canada (\$)	2.5125
Cyprus (pounds)	0.7992
Denmark (krone)	10.37
Finland (markka)	8.2427
France (francs)	9.0876
Germany (marks)	2.7190
Greece (drachma)	456.50
Hong Kong (\$)	12.60
Ireland (pounds)	1.0887
India (rupees)	64.13
Israel (shekels)	6.4349
Italy (lira)	2693
Japan (yen)	190.87
Malaysia (ringgits)	5.0940
Norway (krone)	0.6096
Mexican (nuevo peso)	15.17
Netherlands (guilder)	3.0485
New Zealand (\$)	3.0676
Norway (krone)	12.42
Portugal (escudos)	275.32
Saudi Arabia (rials)	6.1107
Singapore (\$)	2.6389
Spain (pesetas)	230.10
South Africa (rand)	9.6317
Sweden (krone)	13.12
Switzerland (francs)	2.1918
Thailand (bahts)	56.20
Turkey (liras)	496356
USA (\$)	1.6380

Source: Thomson Cook

MPs pile on pressure for statistics chief to resign

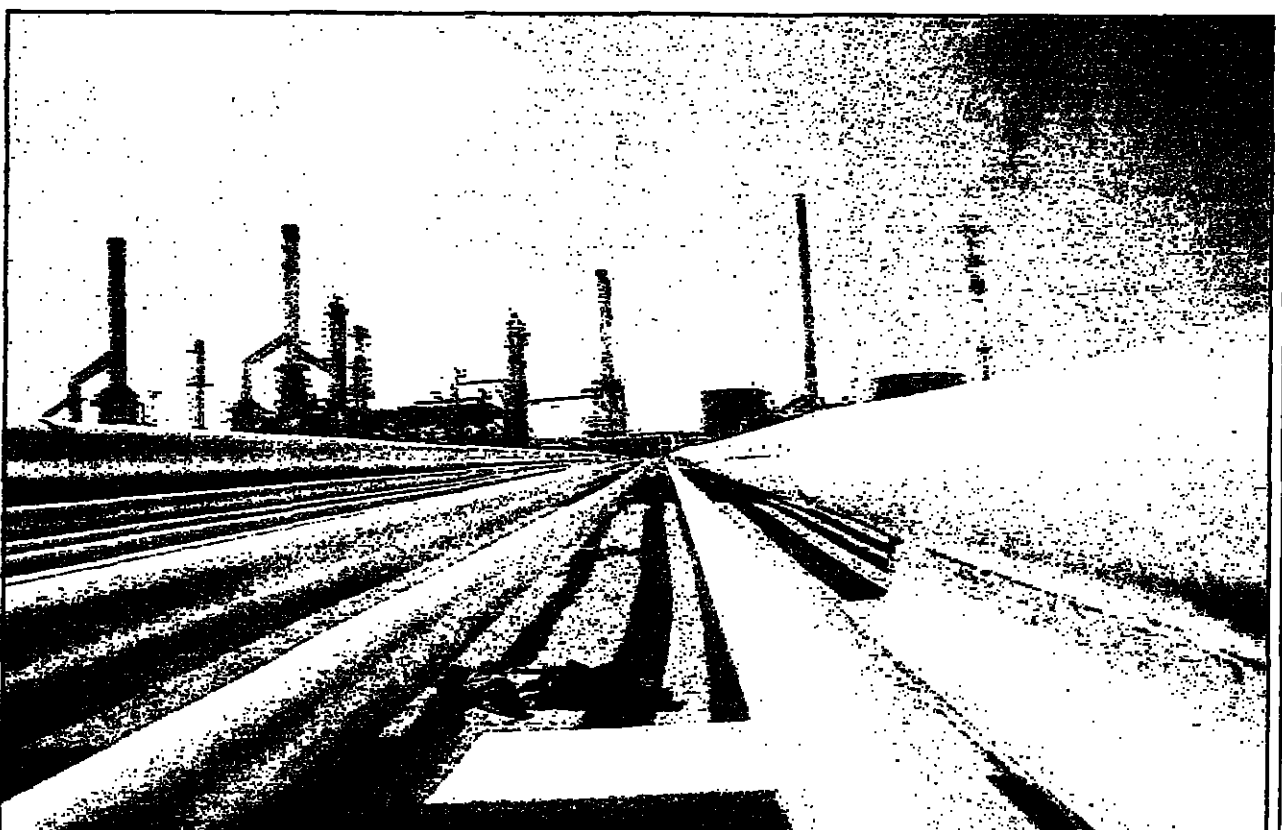
DR TIM HOLT, director of the Office of National Statistics, was under increasing pressure to quit yesterday when MPs criticised management failings at the Government agency.
The Committee claimed the ONS was poorly-structured and under-funded and recommended a wide-ranging shake-up of the agency.
The report stopped short of directly criticising Dr Holt, already under fire over the recent fiasco over official average earnings data. But the report noted: "in view of the many challenges facing the ONS, strong leadership, both from its director and ministers, is vital".
According to the Committee, the ONS has failed to meet the needs of many of its customers and "several aspects of the ONS's performance to date indicate a lack of strategic direction". The Committee also raised concerns about the structure of the ONS, saying that the ONS director had insufficient managerial power, and that the agency ought to be more independent from government.
The critical report will increase the pressure on Dr Holt to stand aside after October's controversial revisions to average earnings numbers, a key indicator used by the Bank of England when setting interest rates.
The Bank and the Treasury were both said to be furious after

the ONS revised the numbers twice in the space of a fortnight. The revisions removed the surge in earnings at the beginning of the year that prompted the Bank to raise rates in June.
ONS insiders are now privately sceptical Dr Holt will continue to head up the agency next year.
Sir Peter Lloyd MP chair of the sub-committee which conducted the investigation into the ONS, said: "None of us underestimate the difficulties Tim Holt faced in pulling together different organisations into the ONS with the budget he had. I think the time to say whether the ONS has good management or not is when it has been given an effective structure. Either the

management, the structure or the money haven't produced the dynamism they ought to".
The Bank of England also came in for sharp criticism in the report. The Governor of the Bank last night took the unusual step of formally complaining to the Committee after his deputy came under fire for his role in the earnings fiasco.
The Treasury Committee, chaired by the Labour MP Giles Radice, expressed two key concerns about the role played by the Bank in the earnings mix-up.
Sir Peter said he was "puzzled" the Bank only raised concerns about the earnings figures the day before publication. According to the Committee, the Bank had been aware of the programme of work which led to controversial revisions to the figures for many months.
The Committee also raised concerns about Mr King's involvement in the subsequent Treasury-initiated review.
According to Sir Peter, the Bank was a "disgruntled customer", and, as such, it was inappropriate for Mr King to oversee the review.
In a letter to Mr Radice released last night, Eddie George, Bank governor, argued that the Committee had misunderstood Mr King's role in the review. "It is not clear to me that there is anything inappropriate about this structure or Mervyn King's position," he said.
Outlook, page 21



Dr Tim Holt: Insiders are sceptical about his future



The share prices of major oil companies rose yesterday, despite a drop in the cost of crude oil

Markets shrug off oil threat

FINANCIAL MARKETS yesterday shrugged off the crisis in the Gulf, and crude oil prices fell after Wednesday's sharp gains, writes Lea Paterson.
Analysts said there was no evidence that Wednesday evening's attack on Baghdad had damaged Iraq's oil exporting facilities, and the price of benchmark London Brent crude slipped 54 cents to \$10.84.
Tony Machacek, oil analyst at Credit Lyonnais Rouse, said: "On Wednesday, we knew there was a very good chance of an imminent strike and that was factored into the oil price rally. Now, we're seeing a setback to the price. Part of the logic behind that is there does not appear to

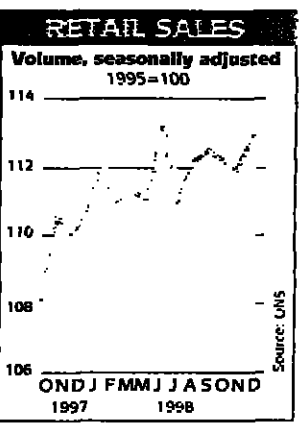
have been any let up in the oil-for-food exports from Iraq." Despite the fall in the price of crude oil, share prices of major oil companies rose in London trade, although the increases were lower than many analysts had been expecting.
Shell gained 9.5p to 358.5p, while BP rose 12p to close at 888.5p. Enterprise Oil, the exploration company, gained 0.5p to close at 303.5p.
The FTSE-100 share index had a jittery start while traders digested Wednesday night's developments. However, better-than-expected UK economic data and a robust start on Wall Street helped the index to close up 54.8 points at 5685.20. The

Strong high street sales dispel bleak forecasts

HIGH STREET sales last month were far stronger than expected, according to official figures released yesterday, suggesting that the economic outlook is not as gloomy as some City experts had feared.
A separate Confederation of British Industry survey of the manufacturing sector also pointed to recovering confidence, fanning speculation that the Monetary Policy Committee might not cut interest rates again when it meets in January.
Neil Parker, Treasury economist at Royal Bank of Scotland, said: "This all backs up our view that the Bank isn't going to do anything in January and will probably cut by 25 basis points (0.25 per cent) in February."
The December CBI industrial trends survey found that manufacturers were less gloomy about the outlook for output, and that there had been some stabilisation in order book levels.
Around 35 per cent of respondents believed output would decline over the next four months, while 22 per cent expected it to rise. This gives a balance of minus 13 per cent, up from November's minus 27 per cent.
A balance of minus 48 per cent of manufacturers said order books were below normal, up from minus 51 per cent in November.
Sudhir Junankar, an associate director of economic analysis at the Office for National Statistics (ONS), said: "There isn't a great deal of festive cheer in this survey for UK manufacturers."
"There are some signs of a slight easing of concerns, but these small improvements should not be overstated. Our next survey in January should give a clearer idea of whether this hint of optimism is justified."
Jonathan Loynes at HSBC Securities said: "The survey brought the first signs of light at the end of the tunnel for manufacturers. The improvement in optimism presumably reflects a belief that the aggressive cuts in interest rates will save industry from recession."

BY LEA PATERSON

There was more positive news from the ONS, which said that high street sales in November were better than expectations.
City analysts had been bracing themselves for a disappointing set of official sales figures after surveys from both the British Retail Consortium and the CBI pointed to an extremely weak November.
However, official figures show the volume of retail sales actually increased by 0.8 per cent over the month, compared to expectations of a 0.3 per cent decline.
In the three months to November, the value of retail sales was three per cent higher than during the corresponding period last year.
The ONS estimates that Britain's high-street retailers took £16.40bn in the four weeks from 1 to 28 November.
Analysts said the strong sales figures showed that heavy



Ladbroke set to reap Coral profit

LADBROKE, the hotel and gaming group, is set to reap a profit of around £70m on the fire sale of its Coral betting shops, it emerged yesterday.
Sources familiar with the negotiations said Ladbroke is close to selling the 833 outlets in a deal worth more than £363m - the price it paid to buy Coral from the brewing giant Bass in May.
The revelation came as the three shortlisted bidders - the state-owned bookmaker Tote and two venture capitalist groups, Cinven and Morgan Grenfell - were preparing to put

in their final bids for Coral, the UK's third largest bookmaker. The profit on the disposal would be a coup for Ladbroke, which was odds-on to sell Coral at a loss after the Trade Secretary Peter Mandelson blocked the acquisition on competition grounds. City and industry experts believed that Mr Mandelson's decision to allow just six months for the disposal and his preference for a single buyer would force Ladbroke's chief executive Peter George into a loss-making deal.
However, it is understood that the leisure group would retain around £40m profits made by Coral in the last financial year. According to industry sources, the chain had a buoyant second half and is set to more than double the £17m posted in the first six months.
In addition, Ladbroke, which is the UK's largest bookmaker, will keep 58 Coral shops in the Republic of Ireland, eight outlets in Jersey and a 12 per cent stake in the racing satellite broadcaster SIS. These assets have been valued at around £20m and would give Ladbroke

a £70m profit even if the final bids fall below £363m.
Further profits will depend on the winner of the race for Coral. Cinven and Morgan Grenfell, whose bids are fronted by industry figures, are believed to have offered between £360m and £375m. The Tote, Britain's fifth largest bookmaker with around 220 shops, is thought to have increased its original bid of £345m, but it is still below the two venture capitalists' offers.
Industry sources said the Coral sale was likely to be announced before the end of the year.

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON
BLUE CHIPS brushed aside the latest outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf as well as President Clinton's impeachment worries, and Footsie closed near its best level of the day - up 54.8 points at 5,685.2 in brisk trading. Supporting shares made more modest headway.
Rolls-Royce was one of the best performers, climbing 12.75p to 244p on talk that it could be merged into the European defence industry.
Derek Pain, page 23

NEW YORK
FINANCIAL AND technology shares rose yesterday, as increased earnings optimism sent the Nasdaq up 1 per cent to 2,031, and the Dow ahead 0.75 per cent in early afternoon trading.
Chase Manhattan Bank gained 6 per cent after it said gains from derivatives and currency trading would lift earnings above analysts' expectations.
Adobe, the leading desktop graphics software maker, also surged 6 per cent, as it said earnings would beat expectations.

TOKYO
A MIXED REACTION to the US missile attack on Iraq saw Japanese stocks largely unchanged yesterday, with banking gains offset by exporters' declines. "A lot of investors don't exactly know what to make of this crisis," one analyst said.
Sony was the biggest loser, dropping 1.5 per cent, while Honda slipped by just over 1 per cent.
Industrial Bank of Japan gained 5 per cent, after it announced a pension joint venture with Nomura.

HONG KONG
SHARES ROSE yesterday, despite uncertainty surrounding US-led attacks on Iraq and the release of record unemployment figures in the territory. The Hang Seng ended a thin day's trading at 10,083, a 1.5 per cent gain. The government report showed that seasonally adjusted unemployment for the September to November quarter was 5.5 per cent, up 0.3 per cent compared with three months ago, its highest level since records began.

FRANKFURT
DESPITE LOWER volumes in the run-up to the euro, and the bearish tone that has thwarted the market over the last month, German shares staged a rally yesterday, with the benchmark Dax index ending the day up 1 per cent at 4,732.
Veba, Germany's largest utility, slipped 2 per cent, with traders unconvinced that its five-year DM31bn investment is sufficient to stave off competition from European peers, and boost profitability.

Troubled FSA enlists enforcers

THE FINANCIAL Services Authority (FSA) yesterday outlined plans for a new impartial enforcement committee encompassing representatives from the City and the wider community.

The move is aimed at defusing widespread criticism in the City and the legal profession about potential abuse of the FSA's wide-ranging powers.

Howard Davies, the chairman of the new financial services watchdog, said yesterday that he believed the proposals would meet the concerns expressed since the draft Financial Services and Markets Bill was published in June - about whether the FSA's procedures were consistent with "natural justice".

Mr Davies pointed out that anyone contesting the FSA's findings would also have recourse to both an independent tribunal to be set up by the Lord Chancellor's office and a judicial review.

"We recognise the concerns that have been expressed as to how we shall exercise our powers. It is clear that we need to demonstrate accountability, transparency, and fairness in all our processes," he said.

He added: "The aim is to present an approach which is fair, not too costly and able to respond to mischief effectively and efficiently."

Legal experts have warned that the legislation as currently drafted would make the FSA in effect "judge and jury" in deciding whether to fine or suspend individuals and firms.

This is a clear breach of the European Convention of Human Rights which lays down the rights of defendants to have their case heard impartially.

BY ANDREW GARFIELD
Financial Editor

The concern has been heightened by the fact that, unlike the Securities and Investments Board which it replaces, the FSA is a statutory body. It also has the power to impose unlimited fines on both firms and individuals as well as lifetime bans.

The Bill allows for the first time people outside the financial services industry to be disciplined for market abuses which are not serious enough to warrant criminal action.

Because of the complexity of the legislation, the Government has proposed that the Bill be scrutinised by a joint committee of both Houses before being put before the House of Commons next year.

In its latest consultation document *Financial Services Regulation: Enforcing the new regime*, the FSA yesterday recommended that the enforcement committee, which would be directly responsible to the FSA board, would have the final say in whether to proceed with action against a firm or individual. It would also serve as a tribunal to which those under threat of suspension or fine could put their case.

According to the consultation document, the enforcement committee should include both "practitioners" and "public interest representatives".

These would be drawn from a panel of people appointed by the board to sit on the committee. The committee would most probably have a full-time chairman.

Philip Thorpe, the director in charge of enforcement, said



Howard Davies, chairman of the Financial Services Authority, launching proposals for an impartial committee yesterday. Andrew Burnman

that the precise format of the committee had yet to be established.

However, he said that while industry representatives would clearly not be in the majority, "industry validation is very important if the deci-

sions are to carry weight".

Defendants would be able to put their case orally as well as having the chance to see the evidence on which the case against them is based.

At present 95 per cent of cases are settled internally

without need for outside appeal.

Mr Davies said he hoped most cases would continue to be settled by agreement.

"If you found a high proportion of cases being appealed and overturned then

clearly something was going wrong."

The paper also obliges the FSA to inform people when they are being investigated and bars it from using information obtained under compulsion to be used in criminal prosecutions.

In addition, the FSA says it will prosecute in all cases where there is sufficient evidence to do so and will not seek to impose a civil fine - which requires a lower burden of proof - where it is pursuing a criminal prosecution.

IN BRIEF

London increases share of business

LONDON continues to grow its share of the world's financial business, according to new figures released today. British Invisibles estimates that 70 per cent of international bond trading in the Euromarket now takes place in London, and that over the past three years the UK's share of the world foreign exchange market has risen from 30 per cent to 34 per cent.

Railtrack bidders

AMEC and GTRM were yesterday named as the preferred bidders for Railtrack maintenance contracts worth £220m. GTRM, a division of Tarmac, has bid for contracts covering the West Midlands, Cumbria and South Wales areas of the rail network, while Amec has been appointed the preferred bidder for the West Anglian and North London regions.

Airport landing

BRUSSELS yesterday expressed its concern over the black market in airport landing and take-off slots, warning that airlines were breaking the European Union rules that allow slots to be exchanged but not sold. Ben Van Houtte, the commission official responsible for enforcing EU air transport rules, also admitted that the rules, which are under review, were "particularly obscure".

Salvage plunges

SHARES in Universal Salvage plummeted 30 per cent to 43p after the company, which sells wrecked cars bought from insurance companies either as scrap or for repair, reported a six-month loss of £900,000 before tax, compared with a £1m profit year ago. The company blamed the influx of cheaper cars from Europe and said the collapse in demand from Asia, where it exports most of its written-off cars, has pushed scrap metal prices down by 60 per cent.

Standard Life

IN AN article yesterday *Standard Bank*, the banking arm of the Standard Life Insurance company, was inadvertently described as *Standard Chartered Bank*. We apologise for any confusion.

Complex Euro firms 'should follow US model'

CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN holding companies with complex shareholder structures will have to come into line with British and American models if they are to attract overseas investment, according to Warburg Dillon Read, the investment bank.

The comments came a day after Warburg paid £300m for 10 per cent stakes in two French companies, the inter-linked Marine-Wendel and CGIP, which are trading at huge discounts to their asset values. CGIP owns a 20 per cent stake in Cap Gemini, the IT services group.

Warburg wants to work with CGIP's chairman, Ernest-Antoine Seillière, to unlock the value in the businesses and believes action by such a high pro-

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

file company could lead to a domino effect across Europe. "This is the next convergence trend," said John Woods, one of Warburg's corporate finance team. Breaking down complex structures, which often discriminate against minority shareholders, is likely to become more of an issue following the introduction of the euro and greater European integration.

Warburg has built up a portfolio of stakes in European companies with similar structures to CGIP. These include 5 per cent stakes in Gaz et Eaux, the French utility, and EuraFrance, a French holding company. It also has holding in companies

in Italy, Belgium and Sweden.

Warburg is scheduled to meet Mr Seillière in January to put a set of proposals to him on how the changes might be implemented. Its action follows a move on Pathe, the French group which holds stakes in BSKyB and CanalSatellite, by French businessman Vincent Bolloré. Pathe shares trade on a discount to the value of these stakes alone and Mr Bolloré has bought a 10.5 per cent stake and hopes to unlock the value.

Warburg believes the prospect of more highly-rated paper and gentle nudging by more active Anglo-Saxon investors will push the complex, French shareholding structures into being re-modelled on British and American lines.

Diageo set to buy back shares

DIAGEO, the food and drink giant, yesterday said it was set to return money to shareholders via share buy-backs, as a way of using up the cash being produced by its United Distillers and Vintners (UDV) spirits arm. Reuters reports.

"Our spirits business is producing so much cash. We do not believe we can use that in a value-creation way, so we will look to return it to shareholders," John McGrath, Diageo's chief executive, said in an interview on the company's first anniversary.

He said Diageo had been ploughing as much investment as possible into UDV's top brands - including Johnnie Walker whisky, Smirnoff vodka and Gordon's gin - since the merger of the old spirits arms of Guinness and GrandMet.

With advance corporation

tax (ACT) abolished next year, Mr McGrath said it was more advantageous to offer share buy-backs than simply bigger dividends, and these were likely.

He said Diageo had bought some shares back at the end of September when its share price was low, and he hinted this would be stepped up to soak up UDV's excess cash.

But Mr McGrath said the company still needed to demonstrate that UDV would grow faster than the competition and also faster than the two separate businesses could have done since the £24bn Guinness-GrandMet merger.

This promise was made on the announcement of the merger in May 1997, and Mr McGrath said the company had yet to show the stock market that it had succeeded.

Diageo will go through its

spirits brands country by country and is prepared to sell "tail-end" brands that do not produce an economic profit, he added.

Mr McGrath said the merger was driven by the creation of shareholder value and aimed at doubling it in the next four years. This meant that £100 invested in shares should create £200 if all dividend income was reinvested.

This kind of performance should give annual compound growth of around 20 per cent, with the market in general looking for 12-13 per cent growth in shareholder value, he said.

However, Mr McGrath said the benefits of the merger had been offset to some extent by the downturn in Asia and Latin America.

COMPANY RESULTS

Name	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax (£)	EPS	Dividend	Pay day	X:div
Asda Group (I)	4,160m (3.92m)	197.8m (190.8m)	4.58p (4.86p)	0.95p (0.91p)	01.02.99	01.02.99
J&J Dymco (I)	31.02m (30.33m)	1.34m (1.36m)	4.57p (5.21p)	1.35p (-)	29.01.99	28.12.98
Barclays Bank (I)	21.56m (21.16m)	2.42m (4.47m)	3.71p (6.06p)	1.35p (2.43p)	06.04.99	01.03.99
McKays Securities (I)	6.35m (5.41m)	2.74m (1.85m)	5.72p (5.03p)	2.04p (1.7p)	31.03.99	28.12.98
James Street (Hedge) (I)	40.25m (41.55m)	2.25m (3.34m)	8.34p (14.2p)	0.04p (-)	08.04.99	22.02.99
Scottish Hydro-Electric (I)	488.6m (462.5m)	66.9m (69.8m)	13.35p (11.75p)	7.7p (5.81p)	note	note
Southern Energy (I)	781.8m (799.4m)	18.5m (18.0m)	18.5p (16.4p)	0.1p (-)	26.03.99	06.03.99
Universal Salvage (I)	42.23m (37.35m)	-0.80m (1.01m)	-2.42p (2.46p)	0.1p (-)	10.02.99	29.12.98
Weather Action Village (I)	0.11m (0.112m)	-0.22m (0.088m)	-0.22p (0.139p)	-3.35p (-)	-	-

(I) = Final (I) = Interim "pre-accounts"
Note: Scottish Hydro-Electric & Southern Energy are in the process of converting to a no-premium, all-share change.

INTEREST RATES EFFECTIVE FROM 18TH DECEMBER 1998. FLEMING Premier Banking

Account Balance	Net % PA	Net % AER	Gross % PA	Gross % AER
Investment Account				
£100,000+	4.40	4.47	5.50	5.61
£25,000 - 99,999	4.20	4.27	5.25	5.35
£10,000 - 24,999	4.00	4.09	5.00	5.10
£5,000 - 9,999	3.40	3.41	4.25	4.32
£1,000 - 4,999	2.40	2.42	3.25	3.30
£0 - 999	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50
Premier Account				
£100,000+	3.20	3.25	4.00	4.07
£25,000 - 99,999	2.80	2.86	3.50	3.57
£10,000 - 24,999	2.40	2.47	3.00	3.09
£5,000 - 9,999	2.10	2.14	2.75	2.82
£1,000 - 4,999	1.10	1.13	1.50	1.57
£0 - 999	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50
Classic Account				
£100,000+	2.80	2.84	3.50	3.56
£25,000 - 99,999	2.40	2.46	3.00	3.07
£10,000 - 24,999	2.00	2.02	2.50	2.53
£5,000 - 9,999	1.40	1.43	1.80	1.87
£1,000 - 4,999	1.10	1.13	1.40	1.41
£0 - 999	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50
Corporate Account				
£100,000+	3.20	3.25	4.00	4.07
£25,000 - 99,999	2.80	2.86	3.50	3.57
£10,000 - 24,999	2.40	2.47	3.00	3.09
£5,000 - 9,999	2.10	2.14	2.75	2.82
£1,000 - 4,999	1.10	1.13	1.50	1.57
£0 - 999	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50
Client Account				
£25,000+	3.20	3.24	4.00	4.06
£10,000 - 24,999	2.80	2.82	3.50	3.52
£5,000 - 9,999	2.40	2.42	3.00	3.02
£1,000 - 4,999	1.10	1.12	1.50	1.52
£0 - 999	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50
Sovereign 30				
£25,000+	4.80	4.98	6.10	6.27
£10,000 - 24,999	4.40	4.59	5.70	5.87
£5,000 - 9,999	4.00	4.19	5.30	5.47
£1,000 - 4,999	3.60	3.79	4.90	5.07
£0 - 999	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50
Asset 30				
£100,000+	4.80	4.91	6.00	6.17
£25,000 - 99,999	4.40	4.51	5.60	5.77
£10,000 - 24,999	4.00	4.11	5.20	5.37
£5,000 - 9,999	3.60	3.71	4.80	4.97
£1,000 - 4,999	3.20	3.31	4.40	4.57
£0 - 999	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50
Telex Account				
Variable	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25
Fixed	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
Save & Prosper Investment Account				
£100,000+	4.40	4.47	5.50	5.61
£25,000 - 99,999	4.20	4.27	5.25	5.35
£10,000 - 24,999	4.00	4.09	5.00	5.10
£5,000 - 9,999	3.40	3.41	4.25	4.32
£1,000 - 4,999	2.40	2.42	3.25	3.30
£0 - 999	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50
Save & Prosper Reward 30				
£25,000+	4.80	4.89	6.10	6.27
£10,000 - 24,999	4.40	4.49	5.70	5.87
£5,000 - 9,999	4.00	4.09	5.30	5.47
£1,000 - 4,999	3.60	3.69	4.90	5.07
£0 - 999	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50
Save & Prosper Fast-Track ISA				
£5,000 - 9,999	4.50	4.58	5.70	5.85
£1,000 - 4,999	3.50	3.58	4.70	4.85
£0 - 999	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50
ACCOUNTS NO LONGER OFFERED TO NEW DEPOSITORS				
Deposit Account				
£25,000 - 99,999	2.80	2.88	3.50	3.57
£10,000 - 24,999	2.40	2.47	3.00	3.09
£5,000 - 9,999	2.00	2.02	2.50	2.53
£1,000 - 4,999	1.10	1.13	1.40	1.41
Higher Rate Deposit Account				
£25,000+	3.76	3.81	4.70	4.78
£10,000 - 24,999	3.56	3.61	4.45	4.53
£5,000 - 9,999	3.36	3.41	4.20	4.28
£1,000 - 4,999	2.16	2.18	2.70	2.73
£0 - 999	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.50

For further information call 0800 092 2265.

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Independent Newspapers plans for profit

INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERS, the Ireland-based international newspaper group, yesterday announced sweeping restructuring plans designed to deliver cost savings of more than £150m over five years.

The group, which owns the *Independent* and *Independent on Sunday* titles in Britain, said the restructuring would take advantage of the latest information and production technologies, as well as modern, more streamlined methods of producing quality newspapers.

Liam Healy, chief executive, said the programme would result in some reduction in the headline but he declined to be drawn on which areas of the group would be most affected.

The job losses are not expected to impact on the UK, where the major restructuring initiatives have already taken place following the successful integration of the Independent titles into the group's other UK businesses. After suitable consultation with unions, the group plans to bring working practices up to global best practice standards throughout its operations.

Independent Newspapers is making a provision of £138.5m against its 1998 profits to cover the restructuring. This will be offset by the substantial capital gain the group made on the recent disposal of its French outdoor advertising business, Sirocco, so the exceptional charge will not affect earnings for the year.

Mr Healy said the pro-

gramme would begin immediately and would therefore have an instant, positive effect on earnings. He anticipated the restructuring would allow the company to persist with its record of double-digit earnings growth next year, despite the world economic slowdown.

"It was felt appropriate that a number of local national initiatives designed to improve productivity and profits should be brought together and handled as one programme," Mr Healy said. "You look much more closely at all your activities in a downturn," he added.

Independent Newspapers brought in Booz Allen & Hamilton, the international consulting firm, to put the finishing touches to the plans.

There are five main elements to the restructuring: modernising production operations; moving to more efficient working practices; streamlining advertising, circulation and distribution activities; consolidating administrative support; and improving sharing of editorial resources across the group's newspaper interests in Ireland, Britain, New Zealand, South Africa and Australia. In Ireland, the group is finalising plans to build a new state-of-the-art printing facility, which is expected to be operational within the next two years.

Shares in Independent Newspapers added 120p to close at 240p on the announcement.

Allied Irish Bank (GB) interest rates.

Effective from close of business 11 December 1998.

Current Accounts: Interest paid quarterly		Gross%*	Net%*
Business Plus Account Instant access.			
£250,000+		3.65	2.92
£100,000 - 249,999		3.10	2.48
£50,000 - 99,999		2.50	2.00
£10,000 - 49,999		2.00	1.60
High Interest Cheque Account Instant access.			
£10,000+		3.00	2.40
£2,500 - 9,999		1.75	1.40
Current Extra Account Instant access.			
£10,000+		0.50	0.40
£500 - 9,999		0.25	0.20
Savings Accounts: Interest paid annually			
High Interest Investment Account * 30 days notice.			
£100,000+		5.25	4.20
£50,000 - 99,999		4.75	3.80
£25,000 - 49,999		4.00	3.20
£10,000 - 24,999		3.25	2.60
£5,000 - 9,999		2.50	2.00
£2,500 - 4,999		1.50	1.20
Summit Account 7 days notice.			
£100,000+		3.50	2.80
£50,000 - 99,999		3.00	2.40
£25,000 - 49,999		2.50	2.00
£10,000 - 24,999		1.25	1.00
£5,000 - 9,999		1.00	0.80
Demand Deposit Account Instant access.			
£50,000+			
£25,000 - 49,999		1.90	1.52
£5,000 - 24,999		1.15	0.92
£1,000 - 4,999		0.75	0.60
£1 - 999		0.25	0.20
		0.25	0.20
TESSA* (variable)		6.00% per annum	
Follow-up TESSA (variable)			
£5,000+		6.25% per annum	
£3,000 - 4,999		5.75% per annum	

هكذا من الاعمال

There are lies, damn lies and statistics

WHO WOULD have thought that a Government organisation as arcane as the Office for National Statistics could stir up such a hornet's nest of controversy? Statisticians are meant to be boring, predictable and upright, and yet here they are in the eye of the storm. They couldn't organise a piss-up in a brewery, seems to be about the sum of the House of Commons Treasury Committee report on the Office for National Statistics published yesterday.

This matters, the MPs say, not only because the ONS gobbles up £123.2m of public money every year, but also because the Government and others have to rely on the integrity of the ONS's information in setting policy. As for the rest of us, we have to rely on its integrity in order to judge the success or otherwise of that policy.

But it is not just the luckless Dr Tim Holt, director of the ONS, who gets it in the neck for a poorly run ship. Mervyn King, deputy governor of the Bank of England, the Chancellor, the Treasury, Uncle Tom Cobleigh and all are criticised for their part in the earnings data debacle, the episode that prompted the Committee's interest.



OUTLOOK

By implication, Mr King is accused of using the ONS as a scapegoat for the Bank's own error in putting up interest rates last June. The Bank was well aware that the earnings data was faulty, the report implies, and should not have used them as a basis for policy. Worse, Mr King then puts himself on to the committee charged with investigating the problems, a clear conflict of interest, the Committee suggests.

These suggestions have so angered Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, that he has felt moved to write a public letter of complaint to Giles Radice, chairman of the Treasury Committee. This is the sort of thing that comment columns

like this one receive all the time, but the Treasury Select Committee?

The ONS obviously needs to reform and modernise itself and certainly it would be a surprise if Dr Holt is left in place to be the one charged with that process. But as the Treasury Committee implies, it does not become the Bank of England to blame the ONS for its own policy mistakes. It was Benjamin Disraeli who said in the last century that there are lies, damn lies and statistics. The Bank should know that as well as anyone.

NTL/Newcastle

APART FROM being American, Barclay Knapp, the New York-based chief executive of NTL, has something else in common with Mark Booth, his counterpart at BSkyB. He is unable to name the left back of the English football team he is attempting to buy. Mr Knapp admits he knows more about American football than its English version. Unfortunately this is all too apparent in the price he's agreed to pay for Newcastle United.

True, he does seem to have shown some footwork in persuading New-

castle to sell up. The agreement gives NTL first dibs on the controlling shareholding owned by Douglas Hall, the brother-creeping son of former chairman Sir John Hall. If, as expected, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission waves through BSkyB's takeover of Manchester United, NTL is clear to mount a full bid. Newcastle fans will probably welcome Mr Knapp with open arms after the abuse of the last year.

But hang on. The deal values Newcastle at a whopping £160m - more than three times last season's sales. By comparison Aston Villa, Leeds and Tottenham Hotspur - all currently better placed in the Premiership table - trade for around two times revenues. Newcastle is arguably a stronger brand name. But so far little has been done to develop it outside the North-East.

What's more, BSkyB has the rights to show Premier League matches until 2001 and the local cable franchise is controlled by NTL's rival Telewest. And it's questionable how much demand there is outside Tyneside for some kind of fanzine TV channel. Has Mr Knapp gone football-mad then?

Maybe not. If the Premier League is found to be acting as a cartel when

it is hauled up in front of the Restrictive Practices Court next year, the picture will change overnight. Clubs will be free to negotiate their own television deals, prompting a scramble by media groups to tie up the biggest clubs.

But if that is the justification, this looks a pretty expensive bet. With-out the same national distribution as Sky, NTL is going to struggle to make the numbers work in quite the same way as the proposed BSkyB/ManU linkup.

And although NTL looks to be paying a full price, this is a far from satisfactory outcome for the thousands of fans who paid even more when the club was floated two years ago. Still, taking a loss on their investment might seem a small price to pay for finally getting rid of the ghastly Mr Hall.

Tarmac/Aggregate

SIR NEVILLE SIMMS, chairman of Tarmac, is being accused of letting ego get in the way of the creation of shareholder value. Merger talks with Aggregate Industries broke down earlier this week amid bitter disagreement over just who was going

to be in charge - Sir Neville, or the head of Aggregate, Peter Tom.

Scandalous, many cried. Management ego has undermined a merger which was clearly in shareholders' interests, just like Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham. And because Tarmac seems to be the company more obviously in need of treatment, it is all Sir Neville's fault for not agreeing whatever demands Mr Tom might have had.

In truth, however, it seems to be less Sir Neville who is to blame than Mr Tom. The two had agreed a division of management functions which seemed reasonably fair. Mr Tom would be chief executive, Sir Neville chairman, and the two of them would jointly chair the committee charged with integrating the companies after the merger.

At the last moment, however, Mr Tom changed his mind. He wanted Sir Neville out of the picture altogether and if he wasn't prepared to go, then the deal would be off. Since Mr Tom appears to have tried this tactic twice before in his climb to the top, and with some success, he might reasonably have expected it to work this time round as well.

The first time was when Mr Tom reversed his family company Bardon

into the larger Evered in the early 1990s. In the process Roy Kettle, chief executive of Evered, agreed to step aside and become vice chairman. Shortly afterwards he left entirely.

Much the same thing happened when Bardon was reversed into Camas, again a larger company, to create Aggregate Industries last year. For years these merger tales had festered on "management issues". Eventually it was agreed that Alan Shearer, chief executive of Camas, would become non executive chairman of the combined company. Then inexplicably it was announced that he would step down altogether, so as to "break the impasse".

Plainly Mr Tom is something of an operator, but it is hard to understand why shareholders in Tarmac should want to help him in his endeavours unless there is something in it for them. This was meant to be a "no premium merger", not a takeover. For a takeover, which is what Mr Tom now seems to be demanding in all but name, it is customary to pay a premium.

Who knows, perhaps Mr Tom will eventually get his way, but since when was it part of the fiduciary duty of directors to agree to sell themselves short?

News Analysis: Although not a household name, the Premier League predator is the UK's third largest cable operator



Barclay Knapp, NTL chief executive, yesterday: 'Football is moving into a new era'

What's NTL's game in bidding for Newcastle

WHEN NTL yesterday emerged as the mystery bidder for Newcastle United FC, many people's first response was: who is NTL?

Since the troubled Premier League football club revealed on Monday that it had received a takeover approach, a whole host of large corporations - including Sony, Time Warner, Carlton and Granada - had been mooted as possible buyers. But the cable operator, whose shares are listed on the Nasdaq exchange in the US, did not figure on the radar screen.

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

of junk bond debt which has helped to finance the spending spree.

So spending £10m on a 6 per cent stake in Newcastle is small change for Mr Knapp. Even the £160m cost of a full bid could easily be funded from NTL's existing facilities.

"We've raised \$2.8bn dollars this year and we have well over \$1bn in cash on the balance sheet," says Mr Knapp. A London share listing, which is planned for later next year, might provide the company with another opportunity to raise some extra cash.

On one level, NTL's move is a neat solution to a tricky prob-

Trading is hauling the Premier League in front of the Restrictive Practices Court in January, accusing the football body of operating a cartel by negotiating football television rights on behalf of all its members.

If the OFT wins its case, the current broadcasting deal with Sky will end immediately and all the clubs will be forced to negotiate their rights individually. While this might be very damaging for smaller clubs it suddenly makes the larger clubs much more attractive to rival media companies.

"Football is moving into a new era and by next year life is probably going to be different," says Mr Knapp. "It is important we have a toehold in that future."

to part with his hard-earned cash than a football match. This takes NTL from the business of distribution - pushing other people's television programmes over its wires - into the business of content, where it owns the rights to the programmes.

Mr Knapp says the company's main business will not change: "We aren't deviating from our role as a distributor and a communications company but we see a role for us in creating more opportunity and choice in television."

Nevertheless, other cable operators challenge NTL's approach. "They've just got their fingers in so many pies," says a rival. "They are trying to become a fully integrated company."

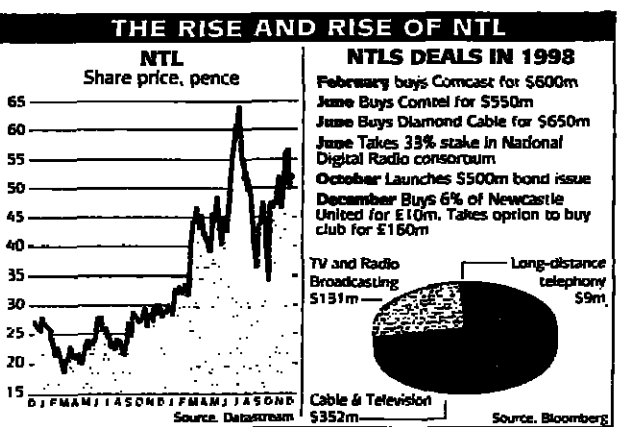
Meanwhile, observers are surprised by the club NTL has chosen. Since its flotation two years ago, Newcastle has been racked by scandal and controversy while failing to live to expectations on the pitch.

Meanwhile, there is no obvious overlap with NTL's existing operations. The company's closest cable franchise to St James' Park is in Teesside - home to Newcastle's arch-rivals Middlesbrough.

"We were looking for a national player and by any measure Newcastle was at the top of our list," Mr Knapp says, maintaining that the club's strong fan base make it a candidate for expansion in the UK and overseas.

But analysts point out that NTL would probably have to rely on rival broadcasters - such as BSkyB - to reach Newcastle fans all around the country, although it might be able to use SDN, the digital terrestrial television group in which it holds a stake, to screen pay-per-view matches.

"If they have to pay others to distribute the matches, where are the synergies?" asks one City analyst. "And then how do they justify the price they're paying for Newcastle?"



lem. British Sky Broadcasting's £825m bid for Manchester United has sent other media companies into a panic, worrying about whether they have to buy a club of their own to make sure they have access to television rights in the future.

However, many issues are still undecided. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission is investigating Sky's bid and its report, which is due in March, will set the parameters for the future ownership of British football clubs.

Meanwhile, the Office of Fair

Directors face disqualification

PETER MANDELSON, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, is to seek to bar three former directors of Chancery plc, a quoted banking group which collapsed in 1991 as a result of the property crisis.

The decision to seek disqualification orders against the company's former chairman and chief executive, Harvey Cohen, 64, who founded the company, and two other directors follows a damning report by Department of Trade and Industry inspectors.

The inspectors - Robert Chandler, an accountant seconded from KPMG, and Anthony Fausset, a DTL lawyer - concluded after a five-year inquiry that in the run-up to its collapse in February 1991, Chancery indulged in creative accounting, inflating profits and

BY ANDREW GARFIELD
Financial Editor

providing a misleading impression of its financial position to the Bank of England, which was responsible for its supervision.

The result was that of the £7.9m pre-tax profit Chancery declared for the year to 31 March 1990, at least £2m was doubtful. When the results for the year to 31 March 1991 were published the following October, they revealed losses of £45m, after bad-debt provisions.

The company, which specialised in lending to the property sector, enjoyed a spectacular run after listing on the Stock Exchange in August 1988, turning in double-digit profit increases year after year, even after the property market started to turn down.

Asda promises to help farmers

ASDA HAS responded to the growing criticism of supermarket profits with a three-year £400m programme of support for Britain's farmers. Though the company denied the plan was a knee-jerk reaction to the Office of Fair Trading's investigation into supermarket profits, Asda said its initiatives would lead to lower prices for consumers.

Allan Leighton, Asda's chief executive, said: "Our view is that there is more we could have done, as an industry, to help farmers. It alarming how big a gap there is between us and the farmers (on prices)."

Archie Norman, Asda's chairman added that it would aim to be more transparent so farmers can see where the additional mark-ups are being made between the farm gate

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

and the supermarket shelf. Asda pledged to choose British produce, meat and dairy products wherever it can.

It also pledged to introduce "cost-plus" purchasing programmes on certain items such as potatoes, so that farmers who can meet Asda's volume and quality requirements are guaranteed a profit.

The move was welcomed by farmers. Ben Gill, president of the National Farmers Union said: "This programme looks set to help both livestock farmers and growers in Britain. It will bring extra confidence to the industry and provide farmers with more marketing opportunities."

Investment, page 23

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London	Time	25 Abchurch Lane, London EC4N 3AB	020 7638 1234
London	Time	100 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0LP	020 7638 1234
London	Time	25 Abchurch Lane, London EC4N 3AB	020 7638 1234
London	Time	100 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0LP	020 7638 1234
London	Time	25 Abchurch Lane, London EC4N 3AB	020 7638 1234
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BSkyB suffers as forecasts are cut

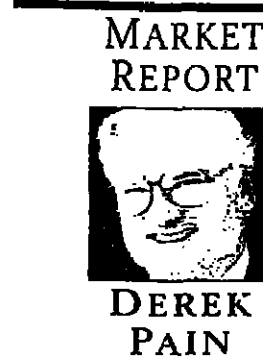
BSKYB, the satellite television group, suffered a double whammy as analysts cut their forecasts and Goldman Sachs struggled to place 17 million shares.

As Goldman offered just under 1 per cent of BSKyB's capital to institutional investors, the downgradings made the American investment house's task particularly difficult, and the shares headed the list of Footsie fallers, off 21p to 480.5p. Goldman paid, it is thought, 478p for its shares and tried to sell them on at 482p.

When the stock market closed it looked as though the US house had been left with shares on its books, which could indicate further weakness for the Murdoch television operation.

Goldman picked up its stake from BSB Holdings, owned by Granada, Pearson and the French Pathe group, which is under pressure to make its assets sweat. BSB still has 11.8 per cent of Sky.

With Granada - and Carlton Communications - behind the ONdigital challenge to Sky, the sale came as no surprise. Granada sold its direct Sky stake earlier this



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

year and the leisure group's chairman, Gerry Robinson, indicated last month that more sales were likely as BSB would be wound up once certain tax considerations were resolved.

A number of analysts cut their forecasts, with some thought to have lopped £10m from their estimates. Mathew Horsman at Henderson Crosthwaite went from £178m to £153m. Lower than expected returns from the cable operation was one factor; another was the likelihood that Sky's mag-

azine would lose its VAT-free status. Sky's problems are underlined by the demanding profit estimates prevailing before the latest round of downgrades. The consensus profit figure was £223m and some seemed to be looking for something above £300m. Mr Horsman, however, still regards Sky as a long-term investment and remains a buyer of the shares.

In an unrelated deal, Cazenove placed a line of 5 million Pearson shares with institutions at 1.190p; the price rose 31p to 1.162p. Footsie continued to make headway, with the index up a further 54.8 points to 5,685.2 in busy trading. Technical influences, ahead of today's futures and options expiry, could have prompted some of the trading. Supporting shares were much more subdued with the mid cap index up just 6.3 to 4,685.9 and the small cap 2 to 2,012.1.

The latest Gulf tension was largely ignored. Oils were given a boost, with British Petroleum up 12p to 888.5p, although the stock market seems to be coming round to the view that its giant merger with American group Amoco will

not be completed until next year. Shell improved 9.25p to 358.25p and Lloyds 2p to 103.5p.

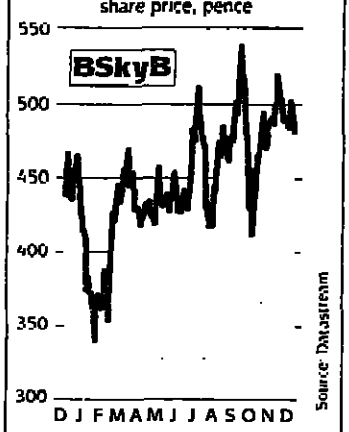
Rolls-Royce suddenly encountered a higher altitude as the aero-engine group was touted as a major

SILVERMINES, one of the companies in the Bob Morton stable, rose 4p to 39.5p on stories that it planned to do the splits, breaking itself into two stand-alone operations, telecommunications and security. Aggressive TT, which increased its stake to 5.79 per cent, must be putting pressure on the company, which has a progressive profits record and made £4.8m last year. The shares, 59p earlier this year, have been as high as 92p.

player in the foreshadowed reshaping of the European defence industry.

British Aerospace merging with the German DaimlerChrysler has been the most popular forecast although General Electric Co

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



seemed to plead at the weekend to be included in any alliance.

Rolls, hitherto largely ignored in speculation about the European reshaping, is now seen as the partner the Germans would favour. It was enough to send its shares flying 12.75p higher to 244p. BAe ended 4.75p up at 504.75p and GEC 7.5p at 520p.

BTR slipped 1.5p to 117.25p.

Stories surfaced that bidder Siebe may want to renegotiate its bid terms because trading at its target continues to deteriorate. Siebe was also 1.5p lower - at 215.5p. Reuters, the information group.

EURO.NM, the fledgling European share market specialising in hi-tech shares, should attract another four Stock Exchange members next year, which would, in effect, double its size. The existing exchange members are Amsterdam, Brussels, Frankfurt and Paris; they expect to be joined by Copenhagen, Milan, Stockholm and Zurich. Euro.NM currently makes markets in the shares of around 160 companies.

jumped 35.5p to 613p on Morgan Stanley support, but drinks group Allied Domecq, which has held investment meetings, fell 21p to 540.25p as CSFB repeated its sell advice. SG Securities added to the Allied discomfort by suggesting a

switch into Diageo, up 23.5p to 673.5p.

Newcastle United, as unquoted media group NTL picked up 6.3 per cent and held out the prospect of a bid, fell 3.5p to 98.5p.

Asda, where hopes of a strike by the American Wal-Mart group linger, rose 6.5p to 154p after results slightly below best expectations.

Hallifax, continuing its buy-back programme with another 115,000 shares at 858p, weakened 13.5p to 861.5p as the prospect of more mortgage competition loomed with the arrival of Standard Life, the insurance group, in the housing market.

Newcomer Bioglan Pharma made a winning debut, closing at 282.5p against a 245p placing. Stanford Rook jumped 15p to 121.5p after signing a licensing deal for some of its developments.

Universal Salvage was top of the flops, off 11.5p to 43p as another profit warning appeared. The shares were 286p two years ago.

SEAIQ VOLUME: 974.4 million
SEAIQ TRADES: 57,780
GILT INDEX: n/a

Investment: The supermarket group wants to re-establish itself as a value brand

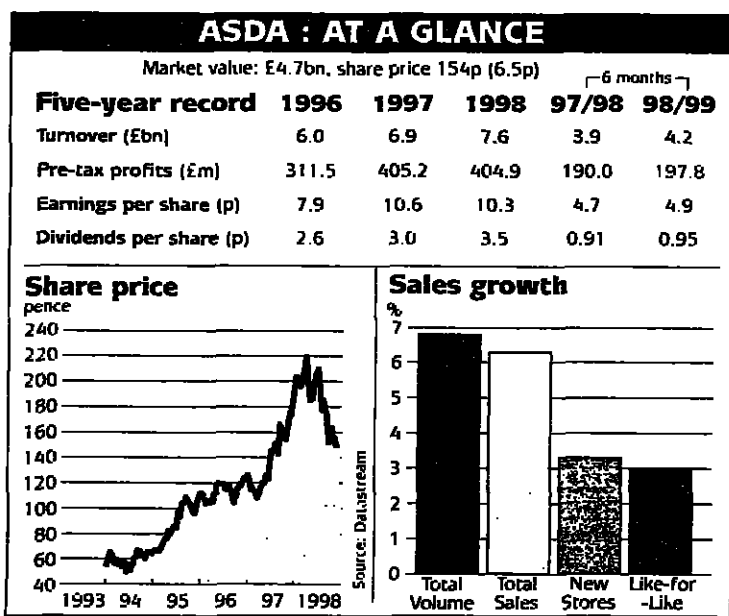
Asda's prices get 'lost in the fog'

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

ASDA YESTERDAY admitted it was being affected by the slowdown in the supermarket sector and said its price proposition had become "lost in the fog" of heavy promotional activity by rivals.

Reporting a modest 4 per cent increase in half-year profits to £197.7m and like-for-like sales growth of 3.5 per cent, Asda conceded it had made mistakes. "This has been the year of the BOGOF (buy-one-get-one-free)," said Allan Leighton, Asda's chief executive. "The impression has been that everything has been on sale all the time. The net effect on consumers is that they are very confused about what is good value and what isn't. We haven't been able to differentiate ourselves from others sufficiently."

To fight back, Asda will move away from promotions towards a policy of everyday low prices with a differential of 10-15 per cent on rivals. "Tough times are here again so this is a great time to be the value brand in the industry," Mr Leighton said.



As part of its price campaign Asda has relaunched its Farm Stores value brand on 400 items. It is also pushing its Big Saver brand of 120 lines of larger value packs aimed at family shoppers.

Analysts said the risk for Asda

was that high-profile price campaigns by rivals would swamp its price position. "People might not notice the difference," said Mike Dennis at SG Securities.

There is also a concern on margins, which dipped slightly on last



Allan Leighton: 'This has been the year of buy-one-get-one-free'

year, though Asda said the margin should be maintained because of a shift in the margin mix across the store.

Some analysts doubt Asda's analysis that consumers are "confused" about the plethora of pro-

motions. They say Asda might have been out-marketed, or that its systems cannot cope with the huge surge in volume generated by buy-one-get-one-free deals.

Separately, Asda is embarking on its biggest ever expansion programme and yesterday announced the purchase of five superstores from the Co-op.

This will give Asda a total of 17 new stores next year and a combined capital expenditure programme of £580m.

Analysts foresee a difficult year ahead and are sceptical about possible interest in Asda from Wal-Mart, the US retail giant which is keen on expanding in Europe.

Archie Norman, the Asda chairman, also played down the possibility of a link-up yesterday, saying: "The last time I spoke to Wal-Mart was four and a half years ago."

Asda shares, which have weakened from 218p in the spring, rose 6.5p to 154p on the results. Assuming profits of £410m for the full year, the stock trades on a forward rating of 14. "Until the fog clears, they are unlikely to make much progress," one analyst said.

Just the right time to find a future in oil

LORD FRASER of Carmyllie must be getting well used to crises and controversy by now. He resigned earlier this month as the Tory Party's deputy leader in the House of Lords following William Hague's falling out with his boss, Lord Cranborne.

Now Lord Fraser has joined the International Petroleum Exchange (IPE) as the oil futures market's new chairman - just in time for the bombing of Iraq.

RAILTRACK is seeking 250 volunteers to spend three to four hours of their time getting on and off a train. Bemused commuters fighting their way out of Moorgate station in the City rush hour yesterday morning were handed yellow leaflets headlined: "Stand and we'll deliver £1,000 to ease those Christmas blues."

The leaflets, from contractor WS Atkins, said that Railtrack is sponsoring a series of tests at a railway station on 9 January, and is offering a lucky prize draw to reward any takers. The first prize is £1,000, then £750, then £250, plus another ten £50 prizes. The losers get just £10 "travel costs".

A spokeswoman for WS Atkins said they hoped the inducement would be enough to attract the required number of people. So what are the tests all about?

"It's an important part of the tests that the people taking part don't know what it's about," the spokeswoman replied.

THERE HAVE been mutterings from junior staff at the Bank of England about the measly £100 bonus they are being paid to come in for the three days of the euro conversion weekend over the New Year.

The Bank is making the "commitment payment" in recognition of the fact that staff will have to come in on New Year's Day, post the usual New Year's Eve revels, and help convert all the bank's myriad systems to the new euro currency.

Up to 300 of the Bank's 2,000 staff will have to be there to change currency accounts, update computer systems and answer queries from banks throughout the City on the changes needed.

A spokeswoman for the Bank denies the £100 payments are measly.

PEOPLE AND BUSINESS
BY JOHN WILLCOCK

"Staff will also be paid overtime as usual," she says. The only real threat to a smooth changeover is the threatened strike by Tube and rail staff, she added.

IF YOU'RE looking for a contemporary equivalent of Scrooge, look no further than Salomon Smith Barney, who have told staff there is "no budget" for Christmas cards this year. Bah humbug.

SIR ARCHIE NORMAN, chairman of Asda, moved quickly to quash press rumours that he was looking to dump his political responsibilities as a Tory MP and rebuild the party's fortunes.

"Everyone knows I have a twin-track career and I intend to continue it," Sir Archie said. "I have every intention of remaining MP for Tunbridge Wells. I'm not about to go off and be chief executive somewhere else."

So Barclays Bank shareholders can relax, for now.

THE NEW enforcement regime outlined by Howard Davies, chairman of the Financial Services Authority, yesterday, doesn't lack teeth.

As Mr Davies pointed out, Clause 138 of the Financial Services and Markets Bill, which is currently going through Parliament, "has powers for the decapitation of IFAs (independent financial advisers)".

I think he was joking.

Tim Richards is leaving Daiwa Europe to join Westdeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale as global head of its debt syndication team. WestLB's head of Eurobond trading, Tony Maude and trader Mark Dodd will join the bank's London syndication team in January, the bank said.

People and Business welcomes any contributions. Please send e-mails to indybusiness@independent.co.uk.

Scottish and Southern high street shops to sell gas

SCOTTISH AND Southern Energy, the utility giant, is in talks with a number of high street banks and retailers about supplying electricity and gas to their customers.

The company, formed in September by the £5bn merger of Scottish Hydro-Electric and Southern Electric, is looking for deals similar to its existing agreement with Argos, the store chain.

Jim Forbes, the chief executive, said that the offer of gas through Argos stores helped the company to win a large portion of its 300,000 gas customers. Mr Forbes, nicknamed "Jackhammer" for his grit, declined to name the potential partners, saying only that the company is talking to several "big household names".

He added that the deals would help Scottish and Southern to boost its electricity customers from the current 3.3m to around 5m and its gas customers from 300,000 to around 1m.

His comments came as the company, the UK's second largest elec-

tricity supplier and the fourth biggest generator, reported a slight drop in interim pretax profit to £171.5m. The results, the first since the no-merger merger, were held back by the prolonged closure of one of the group's power stations. The shares rose 9p to 690p.

Scottish and Southern stock is highly rated among the utilities and is currently trading on a hefty premium to the rest of the sector.

One leading City analyst said the rating was justified because the company's underlying performance was robust and it was making progress in reducing costs. However, he added: "This is not cheap stock and we have a hold recommendation because it has outperformed for some time."

Some observers voiced concern about the regulatory threat hanging over the company's future. More than 60 per cent of Scottish and Southern profits come from regulated

businesses. These operations are likely to feel the pinch of a price review due to be published by Ofreg, the industry watchdog, in 2000.

The Government moratorium on the construction of coal-fired power stations could also curtail the company's growth in the generating market. Mr Forbes dismissed these fears, saying that both companies were used to managing regulatory risk.

Analysts were more sanguine on Mr Forbes' determination not to follow rival Scottish Power and National Grid on the US acquisition trail.

One expert said Scottish and Southern, with its £1.5bn war chest and some £60m of merger savings, would be a serious contender to buy the UK coal-fired power plants to be sold by National Power and Powergen.

The two leading generators have been forced to sell some of their capacity as part of the government plan to open up the electricity market and boost the ailing coal industry.

Buoyant US market takes Hanson higher

HANSON, the building materials group, yesterday defied the gloom surrounding the construction sector with a bullish second-half trading update, writes Francesco Guerrera.

The last remnant of Lord Hanson's once-sprawling conglomerate said that a buoyant US market would lead to a jump in profits despite some weakness in the UK. The chief executive Andrew Dougal said that second-half earnings growth "will exceed the 15 per cent gain achieved in the first half".

The announcement triggered a round of forecast upgrades, with City analysts moving their 1998 profit estimates from £241m to around £248m. However, the positive mood did not filter through to the share price. The stock closed down 4p to 461p as investors booked in profits after a recent positive run which took Hanson into the FTSE-100.

Industry experts said that Hanson is reaping the benefits of its expansion in the US. The company has

spent more than \$300m on bolt-on acquisitions of American building materials producers during the last year and 50 per cent of its profits now come from the US.

Cornerstone, the company's US aggregates subsidiary, was behind yesterday's bullish statement. Robust demand, driven by the strength of the US economy, enabled Cornerstone to push up prices and boost its margins, the company said.

City analysts are optimistic about the division's near-term future. Over the next six years, Hanson's US business will be among the key suppliers to a \$216bn roadbuilding programme, recently approved by the US Congress.

However, other investors are worried about Hanson's business in the UK, where construction has been hit by the economic downturn. The company said it wanted to reduce its exposure to the UK in 1999 through another aggressive round of bolt-on

buys in the US. The company has

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES				
Country	Sterling	Dollar	1 month	3 month
UK	1.0000	0.5985	0.5974	0.5985
Australia	1.6881	0.6845	1.6845	0.6845
Canada	1.5442	0.6245	1.5442	0.6245
Denmark	0.1366	0.0633	0.1366	0.0633
ECU	1.4203	0.7102	1.4203	0.7102
France	6.5493	3.2746	6.5493	3.2746
Germany	2.7932	1.3966	2.7932	1.3966
Greece	16.4838	8.2419	16.4838	8.2419
Hong Kong	12.9800	6.4900	12.9800	6.4900
Ireland	1.2400	0.6200	1.2400	0.6200
Italy	2.7615	1.3808	2.7615	1.3808
Japan	154.81	77.405	154.81	77.405
Malaysia	6.3512	3.1756	6.3512	3.1756
Mexico	1.3480	0.6740	1.3480	0.6740
Netherlands	3.1468	1.5734	3.1468	1.5734
New Zealand	1.2924	0.6462	1.2924	0.6462
Norway	12.5200	6.2600	12.5200	6.2600
Portugal	206.35	103.175	206.35	103.175
Saudi Arabia	8.2893	4.1446	8.2893	4.1446
Spain	2.7620	1.3810	2.7620	1.3810
South Africa	9.8882	4.9441	9.8882	4.9441
Sweden	13.607	6.8035	13.607	6.8035
Switzerland	2.2599	1.1299	2.2599	1.1299
US	1.6753	0.8376	1.6753	0.8376

INTEREST RATES				
Country	3 month	1 year	2 year	5 year
UK	6.25%	5.75%	5.25%	4.75%
Germany	5.25%	4.75%	4.25%	3.75%
France	5.25%	4.75%	4.25%	3.75%
Italy	5.25%	4.75%	4.25%	3.75%
Spain	5.25%	4.75%	4.25%	3.75%
Japan	5.25%	4.75%	4.25%	3.75%
US	5.25%	4.75%	4.25%	3.75%

LIFE FINANCIAL FUTURES				
Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor volume
Long Gilt	Dec-98	118.60	118.50	33.00
Short Gilt	Dec-98	118.60	118.50	33.00
German Bund	Mar-99	115.82	115.75	39019.00
Italian Govt	Mar-99	113.77	113.65	1815.00
Japan Govt	Mar-99	134.13	134.23	1890.00
3 Mth Sterling	Dec-98	93.63	93.64	5948.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Jun-99	94.73	94.82	96713.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Jun-99	96.82	96.82	1814.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Jun-99	96.82	96.86	25.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Jun-99	96.82	96.90	4936.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Jun-99	97.00	97.02	3167.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Jun-99	98.28	98.28	68255.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Jun-99	98.50	98.49	8245.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Jun-99	98.84	98.84	1851.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Jun-99	98.84	98.84	32865.00
FTSE 100	Dec-98	5700.00	5712.00	5540.00

INDUSTRIAL METALS							
LME (\$/tonne)	Cash	Chg	3 month	Chg	LME\$/tonne	Chg	
Aluminum Hg	1228.5	1229.5	-1.00	1245	1246	-2	
Aluminum Alloy	1028	1093	-1.20	1063	1066	-3	
Copper A	1450	1451	-17.50	1476	1480	-18	
Lead	498.5	499.5	-3.50	476	478	-5	
Nickel	3820	3830	-10	3915	3920	-25	
Tin	5215			5230	-30	7745	
Zinc	905	946	-4.30	965	966	-13	
					323075	-2	
PRECIOUS METALS							
pm fty/\$ per oz	Day's Year's	pm fty/\$ per oz	Day's Year's	Coin (\$)	Year's	Chg	
Platinum	355.00-0.40	7.50	Palladium	211.95 0.10	1.10	Krug/Rands	252.00 13
Palladium	330.00 1.00	10.00	Palladium	197.00 5.10	30	50	68 47
Silver	5.02 0.07	-0.83	Silver	2.99 0.05	-0.67	Nobels	386.05
Gold	293.30-0.80	0.55				Mopie/Lec	293.30 -3
AGRICULTURAL AT 5:30PM							
Cocoa	Coffee	Barley	Potatoes	Soya Beans			
LIFFE \$/tonne	LIFFE \$/tonne	LIFFE \$/tonne	LIFFE \$/tonne	CBOT \$/b			
Dec/89 \$94.00	Jan/99 1922.00	Jan/99 77.25	Mar/99 243.00	Mar/99 552.52			
Mar/99 931.00	Mar/99 1820.00	Mar/99 79.25	Apr/99 312.50	Mar/99 568.00			
May/99 931.00	May/99 1775.00	May/99 80.65	May/99 321.00	May/99 568.00			
Oct/99 931.00	Vol 0	Vol 0	Vol 0	Vol 0			

OTHER SPOT RATES				
Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling
Argentina	1.6753	0.8376	Chile	80.30
Brazil	2.0211	1.0105	Colombia	161.00
China	13.868	6.934	Czech Rep	136.76
Czech Rep	49.934	24.967	Egypt	5.7193
Egypt	5.7193	2.8596	Ghana	3979.0
Ghana	3979.0	1989.5	Hong Kong	12.9800
Hong Kong	12.9800	6.4900	India	130.67
India	130.67	65.335	Indonesia	1306.7
Indonesia	1306.7	653.35	Kuwait	0.5053
Kuwait	0.5053	0.2526	Nigeria	143.24

MONEY MARKET RATES				
Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 months	6 months
UK	6.02	5.75	5.25	4.75
Germany	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75
France	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75
Italy	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75
Spain	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75
Japan	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75
US	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75

BRENT CRUDE (\$/BARREL)					WTI CRUDE (\$/BARREL)					PRODUCTS (\$/GAL)				
WTI LAST	WTI CHG	WTI VOL	WTI CLOSE	WTI VOL	WTI LAST	WTI CHG	WTI VOL	WTI CLOSE	WTI VOL	SPOT CRUDE	SPOT CHG	SPOT VOL	SPOT CLOSE	SPOT VOL
10/08-06	25237	731	103/25-3271	731	11/80	45	103/25-3271	731	11/80	45	103/25-3271	731	11/80	45
10/08-05	25236	731	103/25-3271	731	11/80	45	103/25-3271	731	11/80	45	103/25-3271	731	11/80	45
11/30-28	1914	186	108/0-275	1271	12/6	45	103/25-3271	731	12/6	45	103/25-3271	731	12/6	45

GOLDMAN SACHS COMMODITY INDICES										AT 5:30PM			
BASE DATE		LAST		CHG		%CHG		31 DEC		%CHG7Y			
1970=100		135.49		-1.54		-1.12		215.26		-37.07			
Agricultural		1970=100		186.30		-0.45		-0.26		231.23		-28.45	
Energy		1970=100		189.23		-1.17		-0.62		46.76		-46.76	
Ind Metals		1977=100		130.04		0.00		0.00		168.79		-19.93	
Livestock		1970=100		136.45		-2.31		-1.76		191.03		-30.04	
Prec Metals		1973=100		384.25		-5.14		-1.32		463.54		-17.11	

200

هكذا من الاصل

صكرا س الاول

SPORT

International football: Campaigners are clocking up air miles and a £9m bill in effort to bring big prize 'back home'

2006: a costly World Cup odyssey

WALES, MALI and Trinidad may not have much in common - but all have reason to appreciate the benevolence of the English Football Association. While the Welsh FA will receive £900,000 in gifts over three years from the FA, the West African country will receive technical support in the run-up to staging the African Nations Cup in 2002 and the Caribbean island's association will continue to heap praise on its English counterpart for all the recent assistance it has been given.

The gifts to the Football Association of Wales have been dogged by controversy - Graham Kelly resigned as the FA's chief executive and the chairman, Keith Wiseman, received a unanimous vote of no confidence over plans to give the Welsh £2.2m without first clearing it with the finance committee - but the help given to the other nations is all part and parcel of the legitimate business of lobbying for the right to stage the 2006 World Cup.

A delegation from the England 2006 campaign team - comprising Kelly, Sir Bobby Charlton, the Sports Minister Tony Banks and the campaign director Alec McGivan - visited Mali last month and presented their bid to Amadou Dialite, Mali's top football official and one of 24 men who will decide where the 2006 tournament will be staged.

"Bobby Charlton is a legend and many people know him," said Dialite yesterday. "When he came, many people enjoyed his visit." A Mali spokesman added: "After the visit, the FA and the government of England were consulting to see what help they can give to the Mali FA for the ANC in 2002."

Diakite, who said that this help is likely to consist of FA officials advising his country on security matters for 2002, added he would like to see an African country host the World Cup in 2006.

"My decision (won't be taken) yet," he added saying that, should his preference not be possible, he would not object to England hosting the tournament.

In Trinidad, there is no hint of wavering in support. "I'll be voting for England and whatever influence I can use within my confederation (Concacaf, the regional body for North America, Central America and the Caribbean), I will do so," Oliver Camps, the president of the FA in Trinidad, said.

Concacaf will decide how to cast its four votes (of the 24 in total) collectively, added Camps, and said that he would influence Jack Warner, Concacaf's president - who is also from Trinidad - as much as he could to make sure they come England's way in March 2000 when voting takes place.

McGivan, Banks and Sir Bobby all visited Trinidad in October 1997 to talk to Camps, but contact from the English FA did not stop there. Only last week McGivan gave a football workshop in Trinidad with three English coaches and, earlier this year, they paid for the referee Uriah Rennie to attend a similar event on the island.

"We are very grateful for that," Camps said. "They [the English FA] have been very supportive. Whenever we ask for assistance they come forward." He said they had never offered financial assistance, but added: "We have not asked for that. It may come soon. We always need grants."

BY NICK HARRIS

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While the FA and the 2006 campaign team have been making friends around the world with their good work, not everyone has been impressed. Banks, in particular, has come in for criticism, and his globetrotting was due to be the subject of a question in Parliament on Wednesday. The Conservative MP Richard Spring had tabled the question - asking why the Sports Minister had been spending so much time abroad when other sports governing bodies felt neglected - but the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, perhaps because of events at the FA this week, did not elaborate on Banks' travels.

"If there is to be a bid from this part of the world, we should carry on fighting for it," the Prime Minister said. Banks himself has defended his role in the 2006 team. "This is supposed to be an all-party effort and I think some people are trying to sabotage the bid," he said. "As far as I am concerned we are still the favourites and I would have hoped that the opposition would have supported our campaign rather than those of our competitors."

A spokesman for the Sports Minister said his actions were not only understandable, but necessary. "You won't win a World Cup by sitting in your office in Whitehall. It impresses people there is a minister on the team."

For this country by sitting in your office in Whitehall," he said. "It impresses these countries that there is a government minister on the bid team."

Since October 1997 Banks has been on 2006 bid business to the United States, Costa Rica, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Belgium, Qatar, Spain and Cameroon, as well as Mali and Trinidad. A variety of other campaign luminaries and FA officials - including Sir Bobby, Kelly, Wiseman, McGivan, Sir Geoff Hurst and Gary Lineker - have travelled around the globe to drum up support.

"It's very important to meet people face to face," a spokesman for 2006 campaign said, adding it was also very important that Banks was playing an integral part in campaigning. "We're very happy that he is giving a lot of active support," the spokesman said. "Obviously the government is very supportive."

The budget for the campaign - which will last until voting takes place a year in March - is £9m, said the spokesman. He explained that £3m was contributed by the FA, £3m by Premier League clubs and £3m by the Sports Council. It not only paid for all the travel expenses and entertaining, but for the huge array of other promotional work that has gone and will continue to go into persuading the 24 all-important men to opt for England.

He added that the high profile nature of the campaign team was necessary to give the bid gravitas, hence the Prime Minister's involvement in hosting several meetings with leading footballing statesmen in Down-



Spreading the message: The England 2006 campaigners (left to right), Tony Banks, Sir Bobby Charlton and Graham Kelly watch the president of Argentina, Carlos Menem, demonstrate his own skills on the ball in Buenos Aires earlier this year. Ricardo Abad

ing Street and the active involvement of Banks, the two knights (Sir Bobby and Geoff) and senior FA figures such as Kelly and Wiseman.

Given the week's events in Lancaster Gate, the campaign team might be forgiven for regretting the integral part the last two in the list have played in the 2006 campaign, but the spokesman said emphatically that that was not the case. "The way to persuade people to vote for you is to persuade them England is the

best place for the World Cup," he said, and added that Kelly and Wiseman's contacts and standing in the world game had been invaluable.

It is hard to judge what impact Kelly's resignation and Wiseman's involvement in the gifts to Wales affair will have, if any, on the 2006 bid. It is also difficult to tell whether the expensive, extensive shuttle diplomacy of the campaign will pay dividends, even with all its political and ambassadorial backing. There is

no better illustration of that point than the account of a senior South Korean FA official of a visit made by Banks, McGivan and other campaigners to Seoul in February.

Firstly the campaign team made a 2006 presentation to Korean football officials in the World Cup 2002 headquarters. "They were trying to explain why they wanted the World Cup," a senior Korean FA official said yesterday. Next, with the help of the British ambassador to South Korea,

they arranged an intimate dinner in a plush Seoul restaurant with Dr Mong Chung, a FIFA vice-president and one of the 24 people who's support they need. Thirdly, since the visit - itself something not undertaken so far by any other bidder such as Germany or South Africa - they have regularly sent "PR material," said the official. Were the presentations in Seoul impressive? "I'm sorry but I can't remember exactly what they said," he admitted.

Kelly's exit makes no difference, says Sir Bobby

SIR BOBBY CHARLTON yesterday said that the resignation of the Football Association chief executive, Graham Kelly, had not affected world governing body Fifa's attitude towards England's 2006 World Cup bid.

Fifa executive committee members say this will not really affect England's chances of staging the World Cup. Charlton insisted in Bangkok, where he is promoting the bid at the Asian Games.

"It's just a small hiccup in our campaign for the World Cup," said the England 1966 World Cup winner. "It will not affect the work we do. The bid is England's not the English FA's."

Alec McGivan, the man leading the England bid, earlier described Kelly's resignation as a little "local difficulty" that should not derail the national campaign to bring soccer back home.

McGivan, in Bangkok with

Charlton, said his team remained focused on winning the sport's big prize. "I don't think the current local difficulty will be of much importance to Fifa when they make its decision in March 2000, which is still 15 months away," he said. "I don't think Fifa care who is chairman or CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of an association."

England's campaigners are battling against rivals from South Africa, Germany and four other

countries for the right to host the World Cup finals. But the resignation of Kelly was considered a blow for the campaign - even though the Prime Minister Tony Blair and other bid supporters denied it would have any effect.

Kelly resigned after a meeting of the FA's executive committee investigated a £3.2 million loan made to the Football Association of Wales.

The loan was alleged to have been

made on the understanding that Wales would back an attempt to put an Englishman, the FA chairman Keith Wiseman, on the powerful executive committee of world soccer's governing body.

McGivan, a former political campaign manager, said England should be represented on the Fifa committee but the bid team was happy to work with the committee whoever sat on it. "Certainly the English FA should have a powerful

voice," he said. "We're the original footballing country. You only have to travel with Bobby Charlton to see that the interest is enormous. Our club football is followed all over the globe."

"With the greatest respect to Graham Kelly and Keith Wiseman, they know that this bid is much bigger than two individuals," McGivan added. "It's a nationwide attempt to bring the greatest sporting tournament in the world to England."

THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL SO FAR

How the England 2006 World Cup campaigners have lobbied around the globe

OCTOBER 1997

Sir Bobby Charlton, the England 2006 campaign team and the British Ambassador in Italy promote the bid by speaking to the international media at England's France 98 qualifier in Rome. Sir Bobby, Alec McGivan (campaign director), the Sports Minister Tony Banks and 'FA top officials' travel to Costa Rica, Trinidad and the US, each of which are represented on the 24-man Fifa executive committee which will decide where the 2006 World Cup will be staged.

DECEMBER 1997

Sir Geoff Hurst and Sir Bobby travel with Glenn Hoddle to the France 98 draw in Marseilles to campaign for the England 2006 bid.

JANUARY 1998

The 2006 team travel to Football Expo in Singapore.

FEBRUARY 1998

Sir Bobby, McGivan, Banks and Wiseman travel to Japan, South Korea and Thailand, the latter two of which are represented on the Fifa executive committee.

MARCH 1998

The Fifa president, Dr João Havelange, meets the Prime Minister Tony Blair in Downing Street. Also present are a 2006 bid delegation including Banks, Kelly and Wiseman.

England 2006 campaign team travel to South America, where the Argentine president Carlos Menem and Julio Grondona, president of the Argentine FA and vice-president of Fifa, both say they are supporting England's bid.

APRIL 1998

Sir Bobby, Banks and McGivan fly to Qatar to meet His Highness The Amir of Qatar, the Fifa executive member Mohammed Bin Hammam.

The England 2006 team, including Gary Lineker, travel to the Stade de France in Paris to attend Soccex 98, the international football conference.

MAY 1998

Wiseman and McGivan attend the Concacaf congress to present the 2006 bid. The England 2006 team, including Banks, hold a media briefing at the European Cup-Winners' Cup final in Stockholm.

JULY 1998

The British Ambassador in Paris, Sir Michael Jay, and Wiseman host a reception in the British Embassy in Paris to celebrate France 98 and network with Fifa executive committee members.

OCTOBER 1998

Blair invites the Fifa president, Sepp Blatter, to 10 Downing Street to sell England's bid. The secretary of the Thai FA and Fifa executive member, Worawi Makudi, visits London to discuss England's bid and the establishment of closer links between the two associations with FA officials including Wiseman. An England 2006 delegation, including Banks, visits Spain.

NOVEMBER 1998

Sir Bobby, McGivan, Banks and Kelly travel to Cameroon and Mali, to meet, amongst others, the organisers of the 2002 African Nations Cup in Mali.

DECEMBER 1998

Sir Bobby and McGivan travel to Thailand to promote the bid.

McLaren's effort misfires as Ferrari produce a winner

IT WAS a Formula One season dominated by McLaren and Ferrari, and appropriately they are competing in the Christmas books market. The British team may have had the edge on tarmac, but on paper they lose out to the Italians.

Collins Willow could scarcely have chosen a better year to publish Teamwork by Gerald Donaldson (£24.99), the authorised biography of McLaren. What might have been an enthralling insight into a tense and occasionally controversial challenge for the world champ-

BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

Today: Motor racing

ionship is no more emotional or gripping than a glossy company prospectus.

The author was doubtless shackled by corporate paranoia but the pictorial restraints imposed by the team's grey colours could have been counter-

tered with imaginative selection of photographs.

Of course it is easier when the subject has the red livery and charisma of Ferrari. However, this is a well-worn publishing route and many efforts down the years have failed more miserably than the team.

Ferrari 1947-1997, The Official Book, edited by Gianni Cancellieri (Haynes Publishing, £50) bucks the trend. At that price, you might argue, it ought to, but since this is a celebration of the Marquise's golden jubilee something special was

called for. It demanded style, Ferrari style, and that is precisely what it has delivered.

The book traces the origins and creation of the legend, and examines the team's triumphs and turbulent times, decade by decade. The cars, the engines, the drivers, the glories and the catastrophes are captured in word and superb illustration.

Many of the surviving drivers pen personal memoirs, tributes to Enzo Ferrari, the team and the legend. Biographies of those no longer with us

provide a poignant reminder of more perilous racing eras.

If you are a Ferrari freak - or even just a motor racing freak - you cannot but be entranced by this book.

The decade by decade format is followed also in Formula One - Fifty Golden Years, edited by David Tremayne (Apex Marketing, £14.95) which presents an excellent overview of the history of the grand prix world championship.

All the leading personalities and the outstanding races are featured in this easy on the

eye, flick through the years, value for money offering.

This past year has not been particularly successful or satisfying for one of Formula One's grandees, Jackie Stewart. His Stewart Ford team struggled to make an impact in their second championship season and were hounded to the last by speculation of a takeover.

An extension of his contract with Ford gave the former world champion some badly needed comfort. So might the unashamedly nostalgic Jackie

Stewart: Triple crowned king of speed, by Karl Ludvigsen (Haynes, £24.99).

There is frankly nothing new here, despite the tenuous claims this is the first biography that assesses Stewart's pioneering work for safer motor racing from the vantage point of the late 90s.

No matter. Stewart's is a compelling tale that merits the retelling and younger race fans may welcome the opportunity to be acquainted with his phenomenal achievements and contribution to the sport.

The crusading zeal generated in the aftermath of Ayrton Senna's death, in 1994, found overwhelming global support. Attitudes in the 60s and 70s were very different.

Stewart was dismissed in some quarters as a middle-some wimp for daring to seek means of saving drivers' lives, but he was undeterred by the traditionalists. He had lost too many friends to be deflected from his course and his legacy is testimony to another kind of courage.

DERICK ALLSOP

THE INDEPENDENT
Friday 18 December 1998

Broncos revival starts at Sunbury

London's under-achieving rugby league side are hoping that two Australian coaches can revive their fortunes. By Dave Hadfield

TO THOSE of us who have only just got used to the idea of rugby league as a summer game it comes as a shock to the system that, before winter has really started, clubs should be preparing for next year.

Few have started their pre-season training earlier than the London Broncos, with under-achievement last season to get out of their system. If they succeed in doing so it will be a tribute to a remarkable collaboration between two young coaches who both wanted the job.

Out on a sports club pitch in Sunbury, occasionally used by London Irish's junior sides, Dan Stains and Les Kiss are already putting next year's Broncos through their paces.

Two Australians in their mid-30s, they were natural rivals for the role of head coach at London when Tony Currie ran out of time after last season's disappointments.

"Les was initially the front-runner for the job," says Stains. "He approached me about being his assistant. But after a few days of discussing our philosophies, I told him 'Look, I want the job'. In effect, I wanted his job, but he said he could understand that."

Stains, a famously tough and hard-working forward with Cronulla, Queensland and, briefly, Halifax, made his pitch to the Broncos and impressed

them enormously with what he often refers to as his vision for the club.

"But the way Les responded showed me that he was the man I wanted to work with."

So both candidates are working side by side in Sunbury. "Dan's the head coach and I'm totally happy with that," says the former Kangaroo winger, who retired early with a persistent knee injury and worked his way through the coaching structure at North Sydney.

The theory is that the division of responsibilities between the two will play to Kiss's strengths.

"Dan will prepare the first-team squad, with me assisting, while I have a role with the other sides and a broader-based responsibility for grassroots rugby league in London."

"It's understandable that most of our players now come from outside the area, but our image of the future is all about bringing through players from London."

That ambition is given practical expression by the way that the Broncos' most promising young southern-based players are already training with the imported professionals from Australia, New Zealand and the north of England.

Stains points to a young winger, "That's Wayne Sykes, he's lightning-quick and a first-grader in the making. He'll get



Peter Gill, the London Broncos captain, gets down to work in the gym in pre-season training yesterday

Peter Jay

an opportunity to show what he can do this year."

There are others, like Ed Jennings, a stand-off or loose forward originally from the Isle of Wight, and James Brooks, a scrum-half from Henley-on-Thames shadowing Shaun Edwards in training, who are also tipped to make the break-through this coming season.

Initially, however, much will depend on how well Stains and Kiss can mould together the mix of antipodeans and northern expatriates who will make up their first-choice team.

Edwards, never one to suffer with coaches he does not

relocate to the big, bad city, has been one of the limiting factors throughout London's history. The early Fulham teams got around that by bussing in whole sides; now, a signing like Hammond has to move his family to London. He has a house in Isleworth, is in the process of selling his home in Widnes and has trained hard enough to bring his weight down by half a stone in order to revert to his favourite position of stand-off next year.

And, as usual, there are the new Australian faces to get to

know. This time last year the Broncos didn't even know who they were recruiting - something that contributed to their slow start; this time only the newly-signed Robbie Simpson, a second-rower from St George, is not in the country yet.

"They have come together more quickly than any group of players we have had," says the club's football manager, Trevor Howard, who has been organising the comings and goings for the last five years.

Stains and Kiss have put heavy emphasis on involving wives and girlfriends. "We have

to have that sense of all being in this together," says Kiss. "We are still a pioneering club."

This year's new pioneers include players who should make an immediate impact, like the front-rowers, Darren Bradstreet and Dean Calloway from Illawarra and Greg Fleming, a versatile back who was a regular first-grader at Canterbury last season.

But it would please Stains and Kiss no end if the players were talking about in a few months' time are among the young hopefuls working out with them this winter.

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Fit-again Wright is back in business

NIGEL WRIGHT is to resurrect what once looked the most promising of careers with Huddersfield next season, writes Dave Hadfield.

The former England and Great Britain Under-21 stand-off was written off by Wigan earlier this year because of a series of leg and ankle injuries. But now Super League's bottom club last season is giving him the chance to start again, following a final settlement with Wigan.

"I've had an independent medical which proved there is nothing wrong with me," said Wright, 25, as he signed yesterday. "It's been a long year for me and I'm glad it's behind me."

Wright was regarded as one of the brightest young talents in the game when Wigan paid Walsfield £140,000 for him in 1993. But he was rarely free of injury at Central Park and was given an ultimatum last winter to prove his fitness.

If his confidence now is justified, he could form an exciting half-back partnership at Huddersfield with Bobbie Goulding.

"Nigel will be a key player at this club and I'm delighted to have got him," said the Huddersfield and former Great Britain coach, Malcolm Kelly, a long-time admirer of Wright.

Bradford have continued their pruning for next season by releasing two more players. Sonny Nickle, the former Great Britain second-rower, and the winger, Andy Hodgson.

Both are interesting newly-promoted Wakefield Trinity, who have already taken another Bradford player, Kevin Crouthers, on loan for next season.

New club Gateshead Thunder have made another Australian signing, the Brisbane Broncos' reserve second-rower Brett Green. The prop forward, Andy Ireland, has agreed a new, two-year contract at Hull.

Chris Morley, the forward sacked by Warrington last season, has won his case claiming unfair dismissal. Warrington are expected to come to terms over a severance deal, leaving him free to look for another club.

The former Leeds United chairman, Bill Fotherby, has become the new managing director at Hunslet.

SOUTHWELL

HYPERION

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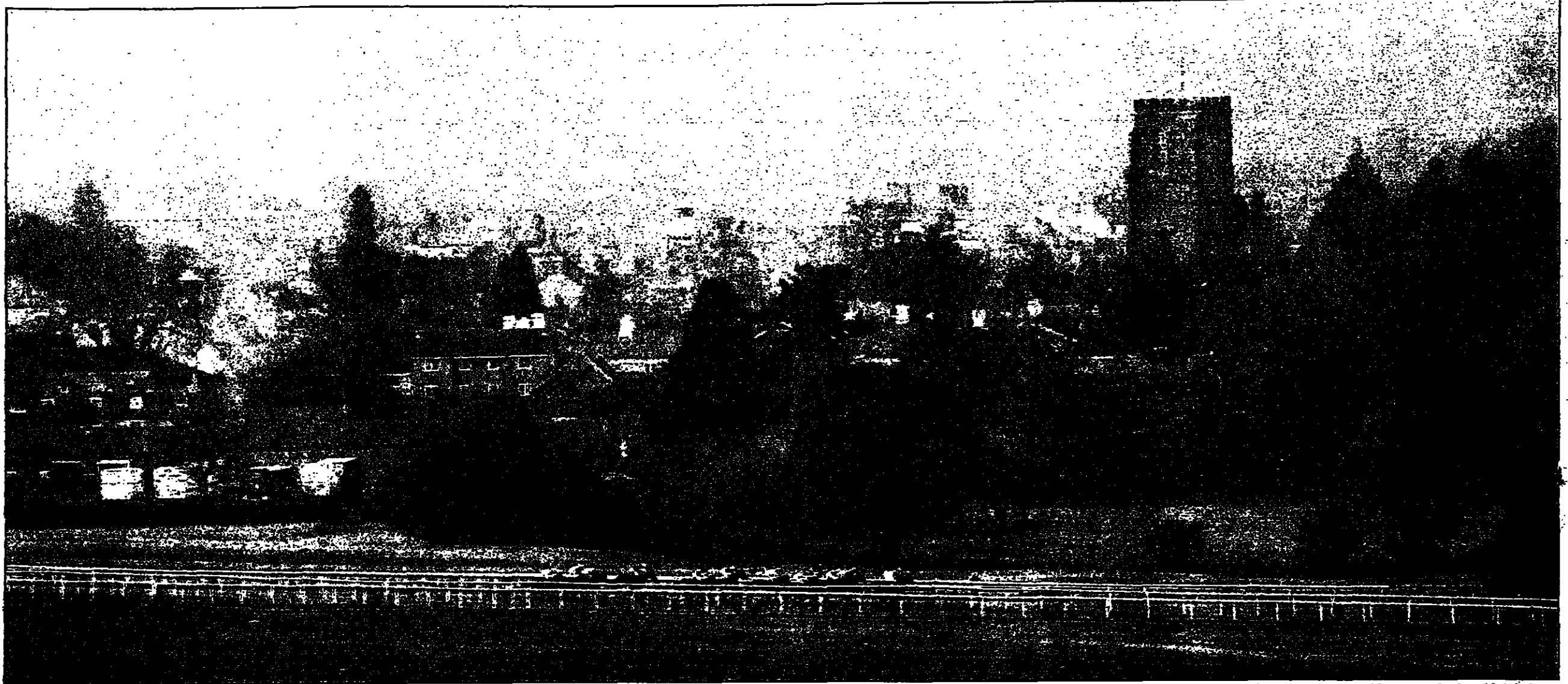
GOING: Standard.
STALLS: 5/- outside, remainder - inside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: High best 5/-, low best 6/- to 10/-.
Favourite surface: high best 5/-, low best 6/- to 10/-.
Course is 3m SE of town and 5m W of Newark, Rotherham Junction.
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SPORT

MCKIERNAN'S LONG-RUNNING QUEST P29 • HEGG STAKES A CLAIM P28



Steeple chasers: The runners in the two-mile Santa Claus Novice Hurdle prepare to make the uphill turn for home at Towcester yesterday

Racing: pages 26-27; Photograph: David Ashdown

English clubs offered £30m bait

VERNON PUGH, the most powerful administrator in world rugby, yesterday attempted to lure England's rebellious professional clubs back in to European Cup competition by dangling a financial carrot the size of Twickenham in front of their increasingly impoverished faces. The chairman of the International Board said next year's tournament could generate more than £30m if the Allied Dunbar Premiership outfits swallowed their grievances, dismantled their high horses and returned to the fold.

"The English clubs are looking at anything up to 40 per cent of the pot," said Pugh, the politically astute Welsh QC who also sits on the board of European Rugby Cup Ltd, the much-maligned administrative body charged with organising the current cross-border competi-

RUGBY UNION
BY CHRIS HEWETT
in Dublin

tion. Assuming five places for Premiership sides, the new ballpark figure works out at around £2m per entrant; enough to ease the cash-flow problems currently being felt by even the wealthiest members of the Premiership elite.

Pugh was speaking in Dublin as five of his most influential IB colleagues - Tim Gresson of New Zealand, Rian Oberholzer of South Africa, Syd Millar of Ireland, Shiggy Kono of Japan and Alan Sharp of Canada - set about grilling the Rugby Football Union at a specially convened disciplinary meeting.

Francis Baron, the RFU's new chief executive, was an-

swering charges that the union had broken ranks with the world governing body over responses to the English clubs' attempt to secure commercial rights under European law and that it had failed to discipline those clubs over their programme of unsanctioned fixtures against the two Welsh rebels, Cardiff and Swansea.

In keeping with the previous two years of interminable political wrangling, yesterday's meeting lasted nine hours and broke up without the slightest hint of a conclusion. While the two sides were due to reconvene this morning, the IB did not intend to advise the RFU of its verdict - or, indeed, any accompanying punishment - until next week.

However, Pugh livened things up by throwing one or two unusually sharp barbs into

his otherwise diplomatic offensive on the European Cup issue. "The English could have pulled in around £4m this season and I must say I still find it strange that they should have decided to throw away that sort of money because they don't like the look of someone's face," he said. "They want Roger Pickering off the board and they want Tom Kiernan off the board. It's pathetic."

Pickering, the European Cup tournament director, and Kiernan, the revered Irish full-back of the 1960s and early 70s who chairs the ERC board, lost the confidence of the English contingent last season; indeed, English First Division Rugby, the umbrella organisation representing the leading Premiership sides, still insists there will be no return to con-

tinental competition until ERC heads roll and the organising body undergoes a root and branch reorganisation.

"Let's get away from the personalities and start addressing the issues," said Pugh, fully aware of his own status as the arch-bogeyman of the English refuseniks. "I know of nothing more frustrating in this whole sport than the situation surrounding this competition. There is fantastic potential here and it's being wasted."

"We've gone out of our way to give the English clubs what they want; for instance, we've changed the voting structure, even though there is not the slightest evidence of a so-called 'celtic block' acting against them. And still we have this stand-off. It's a desperate situation."

The Premiership clubs announced their boycott of the current tournament almost a year ago, ironically a mere three weeks before Bath became the first English side to win the European title by beating Brive, the reigning champions, on an emotional afternoon in Bordeaux. Since then, the ERC directors have successfully prevented a walk-out by Stade Français, Toulouse and the other major French powers, but lost Heineken, their long-suffering and overwhelmingly patient prime sponsor, who pumped £10m into the tournament during the three years of their involvement.

A French delegation, led by the legendary Serge Blanco, travelled to London on Tuesday to discuss the European situation with members of the

EFDR executive. Both sides described the meeting as "positive", but one EFDR insider said afterwards: "If anyone thinks we are coming back in with ERC still in place, they are seriously mistaken. We've said we can't work with ERC and we mean it."

That hardline stance may, however, be diluted if Pugh and his colleagues succeed in delivering the sort of money they were talking about yesterday.

There is no guarantee that the much-debated British League will become a reality next season - or any other season, for that matter - and the English clubs know that they need to generate income over and above that provided by their Premiership sponsors if they are to stay afloat indefinitely.

Pugh admitted that discussions over next season's domestic and European fixture schedule, severely complicated by World Cup commitments and the move to a Six Nations international format, were not even close to a conclusion, raising the spectre of another frantic summer of political wheeling and dealing.

The British League negotiations had so far been stymied by the lack of a formal contribution from the English clubs, he said; the only thing ruled out of court was any move towards a "self-perpetuating closed shop along the lines of the proposed football super league". Clearly though, Pugh firmly believed that some English club owners were in favour of a cosy little arrangement along precisely those lines.

THE FRIDAY CROSSWORD
No.3797 Friday 18 December By Spurius

Thursday's solution

ACROSS

- Gets out, but walks stiffly (6)
- Score for which rabbit went, yorcked (middle) (6)
- "Lie"? "Lay", after one's corrected (5,4)
- Pictorial evidence suggesting stolen Postal Order's circulating (5)
- Cricketer ground in Kangaroo Valley? (4)
- Mother's article cherished by Granny Smith brings a lump to the throat (5,5)
- Sailors catching infection when engaged in hard work in distant climes (3-5)
- Intimidating people investing ultimately in
- mineral aggregates (5)
- Take back quantity of laundry as nurse returns (5)
- Norfolk river forming part of large, mostly uncharted waters? (4,4)
- Look into offer initially available at the butcher's? (10)
- Capital's very big, see (4)
- About to be belted by Father, in fear (5)
- Bloomer, one Douglas's left to repair (9)
- Feeling of compunction after backing German's return (6)
- Successful ball often held in Galway or Kerry (6)
- Western county's maiden overs restricting a Yorkshire opener (4)
- Permanent status (8)
- Girl playing Hamlet? (6)
- Making amends for type of bomb largely implicated in death (9)
- Turn up newspaper item about old soldier (7)
- Committed offence, landing in court (4-7)
- Darkens door, shaves bit of wood off (11)
- Chief's interrupted by Scottish town preacher (3,6)
- Usual gold coin held up by Yemeni leader (3)
- Genuine, as note, when pieced together? (7)
- Decide to have another go at puzzle? (7)
- Second traffic controller to deliver insult (6)
- Row that is suppressed by treasurer (4)

DOWN

- No tangible source for piping time? (4,3)
- Western county's maiden overs restricting a Yorkshire opener (4)
- Permanent status (8)
- Girl playing Hamlet? (6)
- Making amends for type of bomb largely implicated in death (9)
- Turn up newspaper item about old soldier (7)
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- Row that is suppressed by treasurer (4)

Millichip calls for 'massive' change at FA

FOOTBALL
BY MARK BRADLEY

SIRBERT Millichip has declared that the Football Association needs a "massive overhaul" in the wake of the crisis gripping the game's governing body.

The resignation of the FA chief executive, Graham Kelly, has left a long-term power void which is set to grow next month when the FA chairman, Keith Wiseman, is expected to be forced out of office.

Wiseman's predecessor at the FA, Millichip feels the time is now ripe for the FA to recover from the week's traumatic events by implementing the long-overdue changes he failed to introduce during his own years in charge.

"The structure of the FA

needs a massive overhaul. I tried to do that four times during my time in charge but failed," he said. "There is no doubt that the set-up is Victorian. But what has happened should at least speed things up."

"What has happened may make the full council look further than the ends of their noses and realise that an overhaul is needed - not just a cosmetic papering over of the cracks."

Millichip believes that the root of the problem at the FA is the unwieldy and all-powerful full council, and "the fact that

you can't make any decisions without the backing of 75 per cent of the 90-odd members". He stops short of advocating the abolition of the full council or even sacking many of its members, given that the grass-roots of the game needs to be represented at the FA in some form and that there is much experience there to be called upon.

Millichip has followed the growing crisis from its inception this summer, when David Will, Scotland's representative on the executive of Fifa, football's world governing body, first raised concerns about the way in which Wiseman seemed to be seeking support to replace him.

Millichip admitted: "What

has really astonished me is that it has taken so long to come out. The chairman was making a decision which may have been in the best interests of the FA but, when you make a decision, it is always necessary to gain approval for it. It is not the decision that is in question but the circumstances surrounding it."

The president of the Football Association of Wales has definitely refused to accept any responsibility for the cash-for-votes scandal at Lancaster Gate.

John Hughes insists the FAW has done "nothing wrong whatsoever", and says nobody on the council will resign. Hughes also expressed his surprise over comments made by



Millichip: 'Astounded'

the former Wales manager, Terry Yorath, who said "every member of the FAW should resign, lock, stock and barrel. They have been doing an embarrassing job for years."

Hughes countered: "I don't see why any of them should resign. We accepted the money in the spirit in which it was given, for the benefit not of the FAW but for the betterment of football in Wales and football in the community."

World Cup odyssey, page 25

Helmer says no so Houllier goes for Song

BY ALAN NIXON

GERARD HOULLIER was preparing to sign Rigobert Song yesterday after a day of chaos and confusion in the transfer market for Liverpool.

The Cameroonian international centre-half is poised to move to Anfield in a £1.5m deal from the Italian club Salernitana after Houllier's first choice, Thomas Helmer, turned down a move from Bayern Munich.

The German veteran, who was available on a free transfer, stalled on a six-month contract offer, feeling there was no point in leaving Bayern for such a short-term arrangement - he wanted at least 18 months on Merseyside.

Houllier then turned to Song, who had played at left-back in a trial game on Merseyside on Wednesday. The French coach knows the player from his time at Metz and will try to agree a price today.

Song will need a work permit, which may not arrive until the end of January. That would mean the maximum of three work-permit players on the staff, ending the prospect of Olexandr Holovko signing. The Dynamo Kiev player also appeared on trial, against Tranmere on Wednesday, but did not impress Houllier as much as Song.

One player who Houllier is unlikely to be signing has none the less found fame of a sort. The Corinthians midfielder Vampeta is breaking new ground - as a model for a gay magazine.

The Brazilian international will be the cover model on the January issue of *G Magazine*, according to a São Paulo newspaper, which printed photos of Vampeta - fully clothed - and excerpts of the interview.

Vampeta said he was not a homosexual but had no prejudices against homosexuals. Some players known to be gay are accepted by team-mates, he said, although there were no gays playing for Corinthians.

Wanderley Luxemburgo, the Corinthians coach, who also looks after the national side, said he had nothing against the modelling session as long as it did not hurt the team.

"I wouldn't buy the magazine because I think Vampeta is very ugly," said Luxemburgo, whom the magazine is also trying to persuade to get his kit off for their readers.

Brazil is more relaxed about homosexuality than other Latin American countries. While some referees are openly gay, no leading player has come out of the closet.

Back home, Scotland's leading sides are set to increase in

the number of league games they play, rather than the reduction sought by Uefa.

The Scottish Premier League said yesterday that it is committed to changing from its 10-club set-up to 12 by 2000, and Roger Mitchell, the League's chief executive, said: "It has not been confirmed yet what the final figure is but we have very little room for manoeuvre."

Scotland's leading sides currently play 36 league games per season while Uefa is advising that 34 is the limit and would like to scale that down to 30 fit in the expanded Champions League and Uefa Cup competitions.

السنة الأولى

FRIDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION

The Spook The Leak The Editor & His Rival



BY PAUL LASHMAR & ANNE MCELVOY

The story began with the former MI6 officer Richard Tomlinson, holed up in a hotel in Geneva, chatting in early October to a British journalist about his time with the Secret Intelligence Service. Their lengthy conversation started a chain of events that culminated this week with the remarkable suggestion that the editor of a venerable Sunday newspaper, son of a former chancellor of the Exchequer, was an agent working for, and in the pay of, MI6.

The allegation was made in the House of Commons, under the cloak of parliamentary privilege, by two left-wing Labour MPs. There have been suspicions voiced that Brian Sedgemore and George Galloway may have been aided and abetted by *The*

Guardian, for the reason that it was keen to get the name of Dominic Lawson into the public arena without having to run the risk of a possible legal action.

Everyone denies everything. *The Guardian* denies that it set up the 41-year-old editor of *The Sunday Telegraph*, as do both the MPs. Lawson and the Foreign Office deny that he was an MI6 "agent". Cynics are retorting, "Well, they would, wouldn't they?" and the mud will stick.

Tomlinson is an amenable character who will talk to any journalist who visits Geneva or calls him on the telephone. Last year he was jailed for 12 months, under the Official Secrets Act, after attempting to publish his MI6 memoirs. British government law officers have pursued Mr Tomlinson across the world. After being hounded out of France and New Zealand he took refuge in Geneva. The Swiss are less susceptible to pressure from Britain for extradition.

Two months ago, Tomlinson was visited at his hotel by Mark Watts, the chief news reporter of *Sunday Business*. The results of their conversation appeared in an article on 11 October 1998 which opened with the line, "The name is Bond, James Bond - licensed to make a killing for UK plc". The article alleged that a national newspaper editor had been recruited as a paid agent. Tomlinson had told him: "This was the most outstanding success of I-OPS or 'Information Operations', an MI6 unit that cultivates 'friendly' journalists and editors." The article did not name the editor.

The story raised eyebrows at MI6. First, the article breached a long-standing court injunction that British newspapers are not to publish any comments by Tomlinson detailing MI6 operations. Secondly, the new information appeared to contain new breaches of the Official Secrets Act. The Ministry of Defence Police were assigned to investigate. Last week, they visited *Sunday Business* and interviewed the editor, Jeff Randall. They seemed very interested in the story about the editor.

Last Saturday, Michael Evans of *The Times* wrote a story revealing the MoD police inquiry. Since then, speculation over the editor's identity has been rife in the media. He could have provided journalistic cover for MI6 officers and placed stories for MI6 in his publication. *The Sunday Times* followed with a lighter piece, quoting various editors who denied it was them. Mr Lawson said he would speak only to the paper's editor.

Jeff Randall, the editor of *Sunday Business*, said last night: "In the course of the interview, he mentioned that MI6 had recruited a British newspaper editor. That set the hares running."

Randall decided not to pursue the story. "It was possible that Tomlinson's allegations were untrue. And even if they were true, the person concerned - and MI6 - would deny it."

THE NAME of Dominic Lawson, editor of *The Sunday Telegraph*, was beginning to reverberate around journalistic circles last week end. It was rumoured that Tomlinson had named him, and that he had been recruited while he was editor of the weekly maga-

zine, *The Spectator*. Lawson has an impeccable Establishment pedigree. Son of the former Tory chancellor, he was educated at Eton and Westminster, where he was a keen games player. He went on to Christ Church, Oxford, and then worked for *The World Tonight* and the *Financial Times*. In 1987 he went to *The Spectator* (where his father, Nigel Lawson, had been editor in 1965) as Charles Moore's deputy, and became editor himself in 1990.

Conrad Black made him editor of *The Sunday Telegraph* in 1995, after the Cold War had ended. But the patterns of ideological strife remain locked in the years of permafrost. Conservative publications still point fingers at left-wing journalists for being too close to the foreign intelligence services.

In December 1994, under Lawson's editorship, *The Spectator* alleged that Richard Gott, a long-standing *Guardian* journalist

George Galloway (Glasgow, Kelvin), was the second Labour MP to name Lawson. He put down an Early Day Motion and several questions. This gave the press the opportunity to print the story. *The Guardian* then went more heavily on the front page, and on an inside page.

The question arises whether Sedgemore and Galloway had been put up to naming Dominic Lawson using parliamentary privilege. Sedgemore denied this to *The Independent*, and Galloway said last night: "My source is much closer to MI6 than Farrington Road (where *The Guardian* is based). This is a source I trust, who named Lawson."

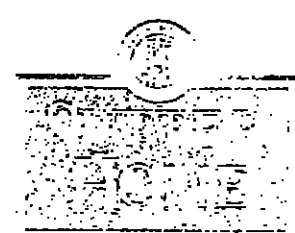
However, the problem that is raised by such allegations is that they are very difficult to prove.

Continued on page 8



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Attack on Iraq

Sir: On the eve of the season of goodwill, a discredited president without a shred of moral credibility, on the point of facing a vote on impeachment, unilaterally orders a vengeful attack on a smaller country already devastated by the effects of war and crippling sanctions. This tawdry appeal to the basest forms of "patriotism" is indeed the last refuge of a scoundrel.
DOUGLAS V WILLIAMS
Wrexham, Cwyd

Sir: I did not vote for Tony Blair for him to bomb Iraq. If the glove-puppet of Britain has America's fist inserted so far up its rear that we are the only Security Council member in active and open support of this action, then I feel embarrassed to be British. Mr Blair speaks of the need for "safety and stability" and I presume he can only be referring to Mr Clinton's term in office, for blowing up other countries does not promote peace and understanding.
CHRIS THORNE
London N7

Sir: The pantomime season is upon us, and once again the British and American governments have resuscitated their favourite pantomime demon, Saddam Hussein, all to bring to an early close that other long-running show, Impeachment. How many Iraqis must die to save the neck of one American? There were no grounds for impeaching Bill Clinton before Wednesday night. By manufacturing a military campaign for personal political advantage, he has shown his utter unfitness for the highest office. He should resign at once.
ALASTAIR MEEKS
London SE13

Sir: No, "the West" has not launched air strikes against Baghdad, as your headline (17 December) claims. The West consists of more than merely one trigger-happy nation acting with the cowed support of another.
GEOFF THOMASON
Stockport, Cheshire

Sir: Britain and the US are now bombing Iraqi nuclear and chemical weapon sites. Bombs on Aldermaston, or Sellafield, or Dounreay, or on our nuclear power plants would render the UK uninhabitable for the realistic future. Do our leaders have no scientific knowledge and no imagination? By this attack they have set a new precedent in the escalation of destruction. We will all reap the after-effects.
IAN CAMPBELL
THALIA CAMPBELL
Borth, Cardiganshire

Sir: When the congressional committee decided to press for the impeachment of President Clinton, we laughed and said, "The only way he can get out of this is to declare war on somebody." Less than a week later, he has declared war, and guess what, impeachment has been postponed. When will our idiotic government learn?
MARY COLE
St Leonards, East Sussex

Sir: Is it unreasonable of me to expect the US to be a fully paid-up member of the United Nations, before launching an attack on Iraq?
D STITT
Widham St Lawrence, Berkshire

Sir: Clinton unzips his fly in Washington and a couple of years later a few hundred people die in Baghdad. Is this the final proof of Chaos Theory?
LEE ALLANE
London SW2

This vegan no wimp

Sir: It is true that, following his withdrawal from hunger strike, Barry Horne is not suffering irreversible damage to his body (report, 14 December), then all I can say is, he is one hell of an advertisement for the vegan diet he has followed for more than a decade.



Christmas Workers No 5: the volunteer, 'Adie' and 'Mr Toad' stack mattresses at a disused bus depot in south London which will serve as a shelter for the homeless over Christmas week
Tom Pilston

Nobody has suggested that he ate solid food, merely that he used sugared water, sweetened tea and fruit juice at one brief moment. He must have been possessed of a level of health to begin with that puts two fingers up to those who think we vegans are all whey-faced and reliant on supplements to avoid life-threatening malnutrition. And Mr Horne is not a young man; he is 46.

If we don't yet have our Royal Commission on animal experiments, we at least have in Barry Horne, who has put his body through the ultimate fitness test, living proof of the healthiness of the vegan diet.
VALERIE PAYNTER
Hove, East Sussex

Sir: Further to Stanley Tyrer's letter (10 December), the argument that the slave trade acquired a pseudo-justification by producing profits for some has no conceivable parallel in the animal rights controversy. Slave labour could be replaced by other human labour, but there is no substitute for a living organism to give us the production of mono-clonal or other antibodies, on which all future therapeutics depends.
DR F HILLMAN FRCP FRCPath
Applsey Bridge, Lancashire

Branded a criminal

Sir: I was appalled to read that "up to 12 million people seeking a job or a voluntary post are to be vetted each year to check if they have a criminal record" (report, 15 December).

How on earth are people who struggle to improve themselves after serving their sentences ever going to get jobs if all employers are encouraged to ask if all applicants have criminal records. These records will only reveal what a person was convicted for. They will not reveal the circumstances or mitigating factors. Someone convicted, say, of supplying drugs, may only, in his youth, have passed a little cannabis or ecstasy to a friend

before a dance or party. The record will imply that he is a drug dealer. The purpose of a criminal record is to allow a judge to apply an appropriate sentence after a subsequent conviction. Hopefully the judge has the necessary skill, experience and judgement to use this information fairly in its context. No employer will have this.
MICK HUMPHREYS
Creesh St Michael, Somerset

Doctors hit back

Sir: Teachers are indeed undervalued by society and this is reflected in the poor remuneration they receive. However, ambitious young science students risk disappointment if they select medicine as a career on the basis of the facts cited by Stephen Usherwood (letter, 14 December).

The salary of £112,000 reflects an "A-" merit award, held by less than 1 per cent of hospital consultants; the standard contracted week is 44 hours, in addition to which there are on-call commitments, without further pay, even if these involve operating at night in addition to day-time duties. Most consultants work closer to 60 than 35 hours, more are leaving prematurely than ever before and doctors, as a group, have one of the highest suicide rates.

Medicine is a relatively well paid profession and most of us still find it rewarding, but it is not as your

correspondent portrays it. I fully support initiatives to make teachers more highly valued and to attract the best into the profession, but it is necessary to belittle another profession to do so?
DR ANNA CASSONI
London SW18

Keep them out!

Sir: By and large, I enjoy David Aaronovitch's blend of humour and wisdom; but I do believe this most recent argument to be self-defeating ("Who are these asylum-seeking scum? They're people like my grandparents", 15 December).

As I understand it, a more rigorous set of immigration conditions would have disallowed the entry into this country of David's paternal grandparents, and that we as a consequence would lose the benefit of his sagacity. He then adds that the same stringent laws would also have deprived us of Michael Howard, and Nicholas van Hoogstraten.

Now as far as I am concerned, that's a price worth paying.
ANDREW MCKENZIE
Woking, Surrey

Sir: I have nothing but praise for David Aaronovitch's statement of the moral argument. But can I ask that one of your other wonderful columnists, Hamish McRae, puts forward the economic argument? Surely there is a mass of data

testifying to the energy and enterprise of economic migrants – and to the contribution that such people make to their new country.
TIM CORDY
Newark, Nottinghamshire

Scots in Europe

Sir: If the UK has already joined the Single European Currency before Scotland becomes an independent state (letters, 14 December), it is inconceivable that Scotland will not immediately be granted full membership of the European Union.
ANDREW BROOK
London SW12

Sir: Am I simply paranoid in detecting an assumption in Scottish nationalist thinking that England somehow wants to "hang on to" Scotland? I have yet to see one good reason why England should remain fettered to Scotland (except as an act of charity) and wonder if it is too late to organise a referendum on English independence – within the EU, of course.
GEOFFREY THOMPSON
London SE13

Yuletide gloom

Sir: It is with a heavy heart that I write to you. I seek guidance about Christmas.

I hear nothing but, "Christmas

is for the children." I just happen to be 53 years old; my kids are grown and married. Indeed, they have blessed me with four grandchildren. But everyone still tells me that Christmas is for the children. What about me? I remember the time when Christmas was really a time for "Peace on earth, goodwill to all men", when adults experienced a feeling of great personal satisfaction from the simple act of being seasonally nice to someone.

Christmas, for me, consists of about half an hour watching my grandchildren opening their presents. Has Mamma really replaced God to such an extent that adults are now almost forbidden by law to enjoy the festive season?
DEREK WELCH
St Albans, Hertfordshire

Divided island

Sir: The peaceful co-existence that endured between the majority of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots before the tragic events of 1974 is often overlooked ("Divided they stand, separated by eternal hatred and suspicion", 10 December).

There is even substantial evidence that on many occasions Greek Cypriots sheltered Turkish Cypriots from the violence perpetrated by the Greek-sponsored Eoka B organisation during the attempted Greek colonels' coup to overthrow the Cypriot President.

This spirit of peaceful co-existence was only interrupted by the illegal invasion and occupation carried out by the Turkish mainland in response to the coup. The Turkish Cypriots have now largely fled their homeland, leaving the majority of Northern Cyprus inhabited by Turks from the mainland, and it is towards them and not the Turkish Cypriots that Greek Cypriot animosity is directed.
SPENCER A GRADY
London CR2

Aid and politics

Sir: Julie Flint is right to remind us of the plight of the Nuba in her article "Are human rights an optional extra?" (9 December). However, her analysis suffers from a few omissions.

Aid is not confined to Sudan's northern region alone. Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), as well as dozens of humanitarian agencies outside its mandate, operates on a massive scale on both sides of the conflict and has done so since the war's inception. In "off-limits" areas of the Nuba Mountains, non-OLS aid organisations such as Norwegian People's Aid, risk their lives to bring aid to the Nuba people. But Flint is right to point out that the big humanitarian agencies which make up OLS are still denied official access to these areas. Until this issue is resolved, the suffering will continue.

The good news is that humanitarians are not silent about this. Most recently, four leading NGOs including CARE International testified before the United Nations Security Council asking for, among other things, political action to improve access to victims on both sides. The Nuba Mountains were specifically mentioned.

The Nuba Mountains need help: their people have suffered for far too long. Humanitarian aid, adherence to human rights and a sincere effort to find political solutions to the war in Sudan are essential to end the suffering. The Sudanese people need them all and need them now.
WILL DAY
National Director
CARE International UK
London WC2

Embassy bombing

Sir: Neville Nagler, director general of the Board of Deputies of British Jews (letter, 4 December), tries to give the impression that Samar Alami, believed by many to have been wrongfully convicted of involvement in the 1994 London bombing of the Israeli embassy, was motivated by anti-Jewish feeling and supported the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in its terrorist attacks of the 1970s.

Many recall her tireless work for human rights. Her campaigning for Palestinian freedoms has nothing to do with religion or anti-Jewish feelings. She had been interested in the PFLP in the late 1960s and has made no secret of this. The PFLP is now a mainstream political party and renounced all military activity outside the occupied territories in the late 1970s, at least a decade before Ms Alami considered joining.

Mr Nagler refers to the appalling atrocity carried out in Argentina, a week before the 1994 London bombings, in which 96 people were killed in an explosion at a Buenos Aires Jewish centre. Speculation that there was some connection between the explosions in Buenos Aires and London evaporated when it emerged that the Argentine bombings were motivated by anti-Semitism.
DANIEL GUEDALLA
London E8

Marathon scandal

Sir: Martin Mottram may be on to something when he asks (letter, 11 December) whether the original Marathon runner had consumed performance-enhancing drugs. According to Robert Browning's poem *Phaedippides*, "fennel a-tremble with dew" seems to have been the main substance.

However, as with all drug-related cases, the causes of death are complex. It seems that before proceeding to the fennel/dew cocktail, Phaedippides had been on oak, olive and bay which, when enwreathed, make the brows bold; this and his punishing training schedule – from Athens to Sparta and back in the days before the battle – were contributory factors. Nevertheless, on the actual death certificate Browning recorded "joy in his blood" as "bursting his heart".
DAVID WALLACE
Hove, East Sussex

Unlike our bossy proverbs, Albanian ones lack meaning

I HAVE received some requests from readers for a further selection of Albanian proverbs, which I think shows very good taste on their part, and I am happy to oblige.

(In case any reader has not encountered traditional Albanian proverbs before, I must just remind you that they are very different from ours. Ours are very bossy and practical – look before you leap, don't count your chickens till they're hatched, etc – but theirs are a bit more poetic, a lot more unhelpful and sometimes apparently meaningless.)

Anyway, less talk, more words. (Which, as it happens, is also an old Albanian proverb.) Here goes!

* There is nothing random about a random police breath test. Have

you noticed that they stop only motorists and no-one else?

* The mango weeps in the fruit bowl because it is forgotten.

* The medieval warrior got up in the morning and went to work in a suit of armour. That is why it is called a suit. It may look glamorous now, but then it was just a suit.

* Three oxymorons for our time: working breakfast, fun run and sporting personality.

* A tall man wearing a hat looks even taller, but a small man wearing a hat looks like a small man wearing a hat.

* If we all had eyes in the back of our heads, our cars would have at least four different reverse gears – and no mirrors.

* If Christmas cards arrived at any other time of the year, they would be classed as junk mail.

* There is no such thing in nature as a lawn.

* The only fate really worse than death is immortality.

* We take it for granted that period costume drama is only set in the past, but all science fiction is period costume drama based on history

Everyone knows what a Stanley knife is, but nobody knows who Stanley was.

* If the stuff written by Shakespeare was blank verse, what is blank prose?

* Marketing: the art of selling a non-stop cholesterol-choked fry-up by renaming it "the all-day English breakfast".

* Which way does a banana bend?

* A man who falls off a ladder always hits the ground and hurts himself, but a man who walks under a ladder only hurts himself if the man

on the ladder is falling off at that moment, or dropping something, which would seem to suggest that it is bad luck to go up a ladder and good luck to go under it.

* Why is it wrong for rats to leave a sinking ship?

* You can try turning back the clock if you like, but you will always come to the same time again.

* Three things for which there is no opposite: a dawn raid, a strip search and a thank you letter.

* We all know the difference between shopping and window shop-

ping, but what do you call it if you go out buying windows?

* What does a fake antique become when it reaches its hundredth birthday? An antique fake antique? And therefore a real one?

* A conductor shaves for the benefit of the orchestra, but he gets the back of his hair cut for the whole audience.

* There was a time when "retro" suddenly became the term for everything that is old-fashioned and vaguely nostalgic, but nobody uses the word any more, presumably because it has become old-fashioned and vaguely nostalgic...



MILES KINGDON

The mango weeps in the fruit bowl because it is forgotten – this is poetic but rather unhelpful

which has not yet happened. Thanks to science fiction, we can now be nostalgic for the future.

صكرا من الاصل

DAY REVIEW
18 December 1998

THE INDEPENDENT

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Futile, possibly, but how else do we deal with this dictator?

WHAT NEXT? That is the overriding question, once the cruise missiles, the smart bombs and the rest of the West's deadly military hardware cease to rain out of the skies over Iraq. The attacks launched by Britain and America will probably go down as the futile end of a futile policy, dictated by the depressing logic of all that has gone before. Almost certainly, they will not eradicate Saddam Hussein's ability to make his weapons of mass destruction. They will contribute nothing to stability in the region. And then there are the suspicions that Mr Clinton cynically unleashed his armies to distract attention from the expected House vote to make him only the second President in history sent to face an impeachment trial in the Senate.

These may well serve only to increase Saddam's popularity among his own people and in the radical Arab world. The true goal of Western policy (once again publicly disavowed, as we visit more misery on the wretched Iraqi people) is the removal of Saddam from power. But the air attacks may only make that prospect more remote.

And yet, at this stage, Washington and London had no alternative. To link the bombing with impending impeachment is to carry conspiracy theorising too far. Even in normal circumstances, events would surely have followed the same course. Not to have used force, after the threats that went before, would have made a mockery of American credibility. If anything, the allies should have gone ahead with the attack that was called off at the last moment on 14 November. The only surprise – and it is a small one – about this showdown is how soon it occurred. To have gone through the usual cycle of warnings would merely have allowed Saddam more time to prevaricate and shift incriminating material out of harm's way. In short, while this is Clinton's war, it is not Monica's war.

But, assuming the onslaught is the "strong and sustained" affair we are promised, it will perforce change how we deal with Saddam. Quite clearly, the era of UN inspections will be over, and probably not before time. For one thing, if the reasons given for this week's attack are to be believed, they have not achieved their aim. Moreover, Saddam will no longer be able to provoke a crisis whenever he likes by denying access to one of his presidential palaces. Finally, the inspectors unwittingly bestowed on Saddam an importance he does not deserve. In Mr Clinton's unconvincing address on Wednesday evening, nothing rang more hollowly than his description of Iraq as a regional superpower and a threat to world peace. The regional superpowers around those parts are Israel (richly endowed with nuclear and chemical weapons) and Iran and Turkey, countries overwhelmingly more populous than Iraq, in terms of military strength Saddam is a shadow of the man who was routed in 1991.



Yes, Iraq has used weapons of mass destruction before. But its leader knows today that the release of a single spore of anthrax would bring shattering, and unanimously approved, retaliation from the West. Which is, of course, why he dared not use them in 1991.

So once this attack is over – with, we can only pray, the smallest possible loss of civilian lives – we have a chance to build a new Iraq policy, whose means at last fit their declared end. The sanctions that have helped prevent Saddam rebuilding his conventional forces – but which do not stop him buying food and medical supplies for his people – may have to continue. But the explicit aim of the West must henceforth be his removal from power.

The means to this end, including the indictment of Saddam as a war criminal and the encouragement of opposition both inside and outside Iraq, will require diplomacy and patience. However, they offer more hope of long-term success than the heavy crump of cruise missiles exploding around Baghdad.

The important principle is justice, not revenge

HISTORY HAS repeated itself in the House of Lords: first as tragedy (for General Pinochet); second as farce (for everyone concerned). The unanimous decision by the senior judges in the land to nullify last month's verdict of their colleagues in the same court that Augusto Pinochet can be extradited for alleged human rights crimes committed while the head of state of Chile, seems, on the face of it, to have undermined a promising development of the law. And the fault – for fault it certainly was (on this we have no disagreement with yesterday's judgment) – was with the liberals' own champion, Lord Hoffmann. His overweening self-confidence in his own righteousness must have blinded him to how others would see his connections and his wife's connections with Amnesty International, an organisation that was

campaigning (and appearing as a witness before him) to have Pinochet extradited to face trial in Spain.

Still, a second look at the results of yesterday's decision might yet give cause for hope. After all, the principle at stake in these proceedings is not revenge but justice. The core issue is that international law should be so developed that tyrannical leaders anywhere in the world have good reason to fear that they will be held personally responsible for crimes against humanity carried out by their henchmen. What was so cheering about last month's verdict was that this vital principle, originally proclaimed at the Nuremberg Trials, was being carried forward in our own times.

Now, the legal arguments will be heard again by a court that has shown it is more concerned to do justice – and to be seen to do justice – than it is to reach any particular result regarding the defendant before it. If a new panel of Law Lords comes to the same verdict as the previous panel, the important precedent that seemed to have been established last month will have been entrenched all the deeper.

Our special relationship with America is stuck in a time-warp

IN A year's time will it be President Clinton or Saddam Hussein who is still in power? The question hangs over the increasingly familiar political choreography of war in Britain.

The Commons met in "sombre mood"; the political correspondents huddled outside Downing Street to give us the latest information from Prime Ministerial spokesmen; defence correspondents had the word from the MoD; the BBC offered extended news reporting what had happened and speculating on what would happen next. But nobody could answer my question, although the care of Britain's foreign policy depends upon it.

For underlying the unanswerable question lies one which the British Government needs to address once the immediate crisis has passed: what are we doing in this special relationship with such an unreliable and unpredictable country as the US and how does the relationship fit in with Britain's role in Europe?

In Washington, Clinton was vindicated repeatedly by the ballot box but rails against a system which condemns him to near impotence. Abroad he raises his warning finger against a grotesque tyrant who takes no notice. In terms of his domestic life he has no armoury left. Do not believe for a moment that Clinton took his eye off the ball, intoxicated by sustained support in the polls. Clinton could have massaged Republican egos, soothed Republican souls and still face impeachment.

The voters are a peripheral side-show as they have been throughout

the Clinton presidency. They voted him in, they endorsed his programmes and then the American constitution prevented him from carrying much of it out. Health service reforms? No way. Gays in the military? Forget it. Step back from impeachment prompted initially by a trivial presidential fling? Not a chance.

It will be much easier for the Republicans to remove Clinton from office than it will be for anyone to remove Saddam Hussein. Yet, apart from the removal of Saddam, is there any other justifiable end game which inflames, divides and costs lives? It is a truly nightmarish situation. A violation of international law demanded a response, but one is seemingly unavailable to America and Britain that will result in the removal of Saddam.

If anything the reverse is the case, and military action will bolster, at least temporarily, his situation. In the short term, Tony Blair had no choice, given all the previous threats and the way they have been treated with such deceit, but to sanction air strikes. The finger-wagging had to be backed up with action this time. But how Britain got itself into a situation where joint military action with the US became the only option demands wider reflection.

For once it is a war being contested without any obvious immediate political consequences in Britain, except conceivably negative ones for the Government if events go badly wrong. With Blair standing so high in the polls already there can be no "Falklands Factor", which helped the Iron Lady rise from the depths of unpopularity to electoral invincibility. Politics was



STEVE RICHARDS
This small island of medium economic clout is always there with its expensive armoury alongside the US

never quite the same again after her military adventure in 1982, although she would still have won the following year's election easily because of the schism on the left.

Nor will there be a "Gulf war" factor that produced record-breaking personal ratings for John Major and so encouraged Michael Heseltine to press for an early "khaki election" in 1991. Sensibly, Major decided not to take up the jingoistic mantle, but his Prime Ministerial status was underpinned by war.

For Blair there is only one way to go in the polls, and that is down. If the operation is a success, his image as a strong leader will no doubt be reinforced. But it is already so firmly embedded in voters' minds that a further surge in the polls is unlikely and politically irrelevant. Labour enjoys a

seemingly impregnable lead and, anyway, the election is still far away.

What is more, the support amongst Labour MPs for the action is stronger than in previous crises. I am told, for example, that Clare Short, a barometer figure (as she resigned from the front bench in protest at Labour's support for military action in 1991), veers on the hawkish side now.

But the "special relationship" will require a rethink in the months ahead. In terms of benefits for Britain it has never been particularly "special" unless personal chemistry intervened. America was a reluctant ally in the Falklands.

On his election George Bush showed where his interests lay with a visit to Germany, a more important economic power, long before Britain got a look in. The Blair/Clinton relationship is genuinely strong, based on a shared political outlook and several displays of mutual practical support, not least in Northern Ireland.

The impact of Clinton on British politics has also been underestimated. New Labour would not have existed in quite this form without him. But a rapport between two leaders should not in itself determine foreign policy, which remains stuck in the early 1950s, the policy of Eden's three interlocking circles where, uniquely, Britain would punch above its weight by having distinct relations with Europe, the US and the Commonwealth.

So, whenever there is an international crisis, this small underperforming island of medium economic clout is there with its hugely expensive armoury alongside the US.

Compared, say, with Holland or Sweden, Britain's transport is shambolic, its schools run down and much of its housing squalid. As its European partners prepare to form potentially the most powerful currency in the world, Britain looks on confused and wary. But when it comes to military action, we are always ready to act, weighed down by the military heroism of the past and our refusal to live up to a more mundane standing in the modern world.

Labour's programme of modernisation needs to revisit foreign policy once this crisis has passed. For a while there has been talk of an ethical foreign policy (although Robin Cook revealed to me in an interview recently that he had always sought instead an "ethical dimension" to foreign policy) and there has been a much more positive approach to Europe, but there is still an appetite for military might well above economic status.

When the Treasury sought savings in Britain's defence budget as part of its public-spending review it returned empty-handed. Even under New Labour Britannia has to rule the waves and the skies, albeit as partner.

If the answer to my opening question is that Saddam is dead and buried in a year's time, while Clinton is still in office, the events of recent days will be viewed, retrospectively, in a glowing light. I fear, however, that the dictator will still be in his bunker while an elected President will have been forcibly removed.

The author is political editor of the 'New Statesman'

QUOTE OF THE DAY
"We must act to counter a real and present danger from a tyrant who has never hesitated to use whatever weapons come to hand."
Tony Blair, Prime Minister

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
"The weak have one weapon; the errors of those who think they are strong."
Georges Bidault, French statesman

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THE CLINTON Administration said it would strike without warning if Iraq did not honour its promise to co-operate with inspectors. It has been very circumspect as Saddam flouted the inspectors over the past few weeks. In all cases, the White House has said its timing has been dictated by circumstance. It is impossible to disprove, but this conflict does remain the greatest coincidence yet.

Sydney Morning Herald, Australia

MONITOR
ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
International opinions on the British and American air strikes on Iraq

Baghdad during the attack. It shouldn't come as a surprise – after all, they are the only ones who have had to endure the last eight years.

Jordan Times

THE DECISION to launch military strikes against Iraq is unimpeachable. As brave Americans and Britons wage war, the only appropriate response is one of unconditional support. There is no more important challenge for the civilized world at the close of the millennium than to ensure that Saddam Hussein and evil thugs like him cannot employ weapons of mass destruction. Any steps taken in that direction are to be welcomed, and these new air strikes are indeed steps toward a safer world.

New York Post, US

THE IRAQIS, wearied by years of tension, shrugged off the threat of imminent military strikes that could devastate their country. "We are not frightened any more. Whatever happens, we are not going to lose anything," said one Iraqi trader. His comments echoed those of many Baghdad residents who have lived through war, sanctions and a series of crises with the United Nations which has taken Iraq to the brink of military confrontation already three times this year.

Middle East Times, Egypt

PANDORA

WHEN THE Prime Minister appeared on television on Wednesday evening to announce that Britain had launched a "substantial" air attack on Iraq, neither BBC1 nor BBC2 bothered to interrupt their scheduled programmes. It was, however, carried live on ITN, Sky News and CNN. Blair's speech was first aired in taped form on national BBC television during *Newsnight*, some minutes later. Pandora was intrigued by the corporation's rationale for deciding that the Government's declaration of war in the Middle East was less important than the ski resort potboiler *War and Piste* (BBC1) or the soft-core body show *Naked* (BBC2). After many telephone enquiries yesterday, Pandora uncovered a fair degree of internal confusion. "It was carried live on Radio 4 and Radio 5," said John Steel, BBC News press officer, continuing, "With a network like the BBC, it makes sense to break into programmes at different times. The programme and the news team talk to each other intensively on these matters. The news team can't just hijack the schedule." But Charlotte Ashton, deputy head of BBC Publicity, disagreed. "Oh, I am surprised they are saying that. They [BBC News] crash into programming all the time. Well, maybe not all the time. Well, maybe not all the time. It didn't. I'm astonished that the number one public service provider did not carry the statement live," said Tory MP Roger Gale, a member of the Broadcasting Select Committee. "It is incredibly ironic that *War and Piste* was on at the same time."

THE LIBYAN strongman Col Muammar Gaddafi's son, al-Saadi, went on a most enjoyable shopping spree in Paris a week or so back. On assignment to purchase aircraft, al-Saadi and his entourage holed up in the Hotel Chillon and partied at the lavish Al Mawal night-club, eventually running up about £200,000-worth of expenses over a 10-day period. Given that Papa Gaddafi does not approve of his officials behaving like wealthy oil sheikhs while the Libyan people suffer from international sanctions, perhaps the bill for al-Saadi's excursion was picked up by other interested private parties?

SEX UNDOUBTEDLY sells magazines, but Pandora had assumed that the high-brow monthly *Prospect* was above such base concerns. Apparently not, for

the mag's latest issue carries - alongside weighty contributions from Vaclav Havel, Simon Jenkins, Nigel Lawson and this newspaper's own Anne McElvoy - a raunchy "sexual diary from inside Wandsworth prison" by the convict/columnist Peter Wayne. As explicit as anything on the top shelf, the piece offers an uncontrite celebration of a homosexual convict's lifestyle during the Eighties at the outset of the Aids epidemic - plus a concluding paragraph that shows little has changed in 1998. "It is night: one in a thousand nights of close confinement. There's a boy in my cell. He's young. He's attractive. He's willing to go... We both know there's no turning back." Odd, too, that another article in the same issue, "A Pornographic Culture" attacks Britain's sexual freedom that "instead of liberating us... is enslaving us".

IT'S BEEN a duff quip a minute from Robin Cook lately. Yesterday we reported on his off-the-cuff remark that his job, not his new bride, was the "number one passion" in his life. At the Foreign Secretary's Christmas party on Wednesday evening, he told the jolly gathering that it had been a "very strange year, a very entertaining year". He had visited 29 countries and spent 178 hours in the air, circling the globe the equivalent of two-and-a-half times. "The worst thing is that I haven't been able to collect any air miles." Later, when one journalist suggested that the sudden decision to bomb Iraq would provoke many *Wag the Dog* jokes, Cook confessed total ignorance of the film and the phrase. Perhaps if he took Gaynor out to the cinema more often, it would brighten up his own repartee a bit.

THE EMOTIVE singer Sinead O'Connor (pictured) has told *The Independent's* sister newspaper in Ireland that she's carrying a torch for the precariously perched US President. The unpredictably romantic Sinead has felt that Bill Clinton "is the sexiest man in the universe" ever since she read the details of his quirky affair with Monica Lewinsky. "I would bring my own cigars, absolutely. My mouth is watering at the thought of it. I thought he was sexy anyway, but now... my God!"



Judges must declare their interests



CONOR GEARTY

In ethical cases under the Human Rights Act, a judges' links to pressure groups will matter hugely

IT IS always exciting when a famously brainy person displays the intelligence of an under-achieving amoeba. There is something about such fallibility that gives strength to the rest of us, toiling away in our dull routine, cruelly handicapped by our all too ordinary minds. Lord Hoffman's moral qualities are clear for all to see, and his personal integrity remains unscathed by yesterday's decision to re-open the Pinochet proceedings because of his undeclared connection with Amnesty International. Lord Hoffman's legal virtuosity is legendary and doubtless will remain so, but it is his misfortune that it will be for his political judgement (or rather the lack of it) that he will now forever be remembered.

It is hard to see how Lord Browne-Wilkinson and his colleagues, hearing yesterday's appeal, could have done other than overturn the Lords' earlier ruling. Lord Hoffman had failed to declare both a personal and a family involvement in an organisation that was permitted to address the bench directly from a strongly anti-Pinochet perspective. Not only this, but he was reportedly

heavily engaged in the argument in the case in a way that had underpinned that organisation's legal submission. His was the vital vote in a case in which the end result had been very controversial, drawing strong dissenting judgments from two law lords, and being at variance with an earlier ruling by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham and two of his colleagues in the High

Court. If justice must not only be done, but also be seen to be done, then it is hard to see how the original decision could have been allowed to stand.

The rehearing in the new year will presumably have to disregard the judgements of the first House of Lords decision, treating them as though they have never existed. The rhetoric of Lords Steyn and Nicholls, which so excited the legal world just a few weeks ago, has been consigned by Lord Hoffman's bungle into a kind of legal limbo, from where they must scream silently for the attention of future jurists. The extent to which they are implicitly acknowledged in the fresh judgments will be one of the fascinating aspects of the new hearing.

In the longer term, Lord Hoffman may have done his colleagues a good turn by alerting them to how their world has changed. In the latter years of dark Tory rule, the judges became accustomed to participating in civil society as the patrons or supporters of a variety of vaguely liberal bodies, dealing with human rights, European law, penal reform and the like. It was partly through

these activities, and the public speeches and appearances that went with them, that the judges managed to reconstruct themselves as open, modern and friendly as Spycatcher and the miscarriage of justice catastrophes that had engulfed them in the Eighties.

This civic engagement may now need to be re-thought, particularly in view of the recently enacted Human Rights Act, due to come into force in a little over a year. This legislation invites the judges to assume a far more activist role in guiding our parliamentary democracy as to the ethical solutions to various problems previously thought entirely political. In cases on abortion, euthanasia, torture, free speech and the like, it will matter enormously which judges hear which cases and to which pressure groups and research bodies they belong.

There is a strong convention in the UK constitution that judges should not be politically active in the formal sense of being engaged in one or other of our traditional political parties. It may be that the Hoffman catastrophe shows that the time has come to bring this

convention up-to-date, so as to reflect the fact that politics in these post-Modern days is fought out across society as a whole and not just between traditional, monolithic class enemies.

There is another dimension to this judicial activism, as well. In the last 15 years, the judges have also allowed themselves to become involved in various extra-judicial roles involving the control of telephone tapping, the security service and other aspects of the secret state. Many of their number have seen fit to accept appointment to review sensitive political issues, such as the future of the UK's counter-terrorism laws and the culpability of the army for the events of Bloody Sunday. These activities should be carefully reassessed in light of the new political and judicial climate. It is a judge's job to judge, not to campaign, investigate or whitewash on behalf of others. This needs to be remembered or there is the chance that a series of Hoffmannesque debacles may lie ahead.

The writer is professor of human rights law at King's College London.

Sandwiched between Mother Teresa and Genghis Khan



PHILIP HENSHER

These lists are designed to reassure us that the moment we inhabit is the most important

HISTORY, AS they say, is what you can remember. The company responsible for the Millennium Dome has been trying to raise excitement by producing a television advert, which lists a decidedly odd selection of the most significant events of the last 1,000 years. Of course, they are not put forward in any serious spirit, but their eccentricity still makes you wonder about the sanity of the people in charge of this peculiar enterprise. First are the Easter Island statues. Then Westminster Abbey. Michelangelo. Sir Walter Raleigh's discovery of the potato. Shakespeare's sonnets. The invention of the sandwich. Florence Nightingale. Mother Teresa. John Logie Baird. Man on the moon, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of apartheid.

Hmm. A curious list, this, distinguished mainly by the incredible restraint which prevented the organisers including the Apotheosis of Tony Blair somewhere between the sandwich and the potato. The list mostly constitutes events achieved in or by the English-speaking world - I wonder who, outside England, would think of Westminster Abbey as constituting one of the most significant events even of the 11th century. Let alone the millennium. I mean, there's nothing wrong with the building, but I can't entirely see the world-shaking significance of it. Odder still is the fact that almost half the list seems to have taken place in our lifetime. I suppose putting a man on the moon was quite an interesting thing to do, but Mother Teresa? Is the end of apartheid to be compared to the end of slavery? The inclusion of the sandwich is, surely, mostly to do with changes in our eating habits over the last fifteen years, and will look very odd indeed the next time our eating habits change. The fall of the Berlin Wall is a

more awkward fact to deal with. Certainly, the great flourishing of Marxist government deserves some kind of memorial, and one understands that the makers of television commercials want to be upbeat. But it's still hard to justify including consequences like the fall of Eastern Europe to capitalism, rather than, say, the Russian Revolution, or, for that matter, the French.

The more one looks at these sorts of lists, of course, the more one realises that they are chiefly designed not to give us some kind of grasp on history but to reassure ourselves that the moment in history we inhabit is the most important. The fall of the Berlin Wall was certainly a huge event, but its inclusion, in preference to the Battle of Waterloo, say, can only be due to the fact that Sholto Douglas-Horne, the marketing director of the New Millennium Experience Company, recalls seeing the one on television and not the other. It is something one might term the "Michael Owen" effect; the certain knowledge that, if

one asked any group of schoolboys who the most significant personality of the last thousand years was, they would not come up with Napoleon or Darwin but with this year's fashionable footballer.

But all the same, it isn't entirely a pointless exercise, though the New Millennium Experience Company has done its best to make it seem so. It has the potential to be a much more meaningful list than, say, the 100 greatest novels or the best films ever made. History is meaningful, as the philosophers say, and some events have much more significance than others, produce greater consequences. I've come up with 10 events in history which might be on a serious list; only one happened in the 20th century, which might seem eccentric. It's right, though, to leave things out for the same reason that General de Gaulle is said to have refused to make any comment on the French Revolution: it's too early to tell.

First comes Alberti's codification of linear perspective and the vanishing point, after which no-one in the West ever looked at the world in the same way again. A universal shift in human perception like the one brought about by Alberti is, surely, the biggest event one can conceive of after *De Pictura*, the world, and not just the means of its representation, was transformed.

Gutenberg's invention of movable type should be in anyone's list. Before Gutenberg, books were precious objects; afterwards, they were bearers of thought.

Next is the fall of Constantinople, which led to the Renaissance and the rediscovery of the learning of the ancients in Europe. People will tell you that the Middle Ages knew about the ancients, and some, such as Averroes, sort of did; the crucial thing was the systematic nature



Mother Teresa - a transient icon?

of the Renaissance's learning. Then we have the Battle of Lepanto - the reason Europe is Christian and not Islamic - and the conversion of Iran and the return of Khomeini from exile, the consequences of which are only now beginning to be felt.

The discovery of anaesthetics is up there - I mean, just imagine the alternative, as is the Seven Years War, which is the reason the British had an empire, to everyone's benefit, and the reason the world speaks English and not French.

Then there is the realist novel, which is the greatest triumph of Western literature, and which, like Alberti's momentous discovery, changed the way everyone thinks of their own lives.

It hardly matters which example you choose, whether it be *War and Peace* or *Der Zauberberg* or *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu*; the crucial thing is the discovery of the form and the decisive break with the imagination of the past. Shakespeare's sonnets are the continuation of an ancient project; Stendhal is something new.

The two last events on my list, however, are rather unquantifiable. The first is something we conveniently call "the death of God"; the way God disappeared from the Western mind at some point in the late 19th century, leaving Darwin and Freud and a proper, grown-up respect for truth.

The last is a 13th-century bandit called Temujin, or, as we call him, Genghis Khan. The empire of the Golden Horde formed the Rus, in mind; you can see the consequences of the Tartar domination in Napoleon's campaigns, in the 19th century Great Game, in the foreign policy pursued by Russia today. The Russian mind was formed by the distant memory of Genghis Khan. It isn't given to many men to change the course of history for centuries after their death - Napoleon, Martin Luther, Hitler - but Genghis Khan undoubtedly did, and the effects of his empire will be felt as long as Russia exists.

On the other hand, I concede that a Marks & Spencer sandwich makes a more cheerful advert on the telly

The auld alliance is still healthy



PODIUM

DAVID STEEL
From a lecture by the former Liberal Party leader to the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh

IT IS an old joke, which I use frequently, that there was no such thing as a British empire; it was a Scottish empire on to which the English attached themselves. Certainly in terms of missionaries, explorers and engineers, the Scottish impact was substantial. I live a few miles from the humble cottage birthplace of Dr Mungo Park of Selkirkshire, whose expeditions to the Niger opened up the western part of the African continent, whereas his more famous Lanarkshire successor, Dr David Livingstone, achieved the same for east and central Africa. It is a humbling experience to visit the tough-behaved missionaries bearing the names of Scottish missionaries who died of malaria on the shores of Lake Malawi in pursuit of bringing education, medicine and Christianity to the peoples of the region.

Twentieth-century African presidents such as Nyerere of Tanzania and Kaunda of Zambia have paid repeated tributes to their Scottish influence. Lord Kelvin and James Watt turned the Clyde into the ship-building and engineering

capital of the world. The MacKinnon family operated the great British India shipping line. David Hume, Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson provided an intellectual export from Scotland of an equally world-wide importance.

More than half the signers of the American Declaration of Independence were of recent Scots descent. Most of the Scots who arrived in Canada had been sharpened on the grindstone of hard lives in Scotland. Resilient and resourceful, they quickly established themselves at the forefront of Canadian society.

Of course, Scotland had long been more closely linked to the European continent than was England. Historically the relationship between Scottish universities and those in Leiden and Bologna were real. The "College des Ecosais" in France in 1525 was the forerunner of our own universities.

There were our church links with Luther and Calvin, influencing not only John Knox. Our legal system was - and remains - the Roman-Dutch one, not that of English common law; trade with the Low Countries led Dutch red-

filled roofs all over Fife and East Lothian and built up our woollen textile industry; similarly the Scandinavian trade routes left us with a commonality of dialect words such as "kirk", "tatties" and "scrive". Even today a teenage hitchhiker in Europe will have greater success wearing a kilt than the universal jeans.

A Mori poll for the European Movement in 1996, at the height of Eurosceptic domi-

nance of the Europe debate, found that Scots favoured staying in Europe by a majority of 23 per cent, compared to a majority of 9 per cent for the UK as a whole. The advent of the euro is an opportunity to strengthen Scotland's close trading links with other EU countries, free from currency fluctuations.

The auld alliance of Scotland and France had its comic aspect as well as its historic, turbulent one. At one point before the Act of Union, the English government was so at odds with the French that it banned the drinking of claret. This delicious export continued in larger quantities into Leith, the port of Edinburgh, from where my Border constituents - or rather their ancestors - made a tidy profit by smuggling it across into England.

Today it would be difficult to find two European countries between whom goods go back and forth more than between England and Scotland, which is why I find calls for total independence and the break-up of the Union so absurd. To debate who would or could not qualify for Scottish citizenship seems a pointless and irrelevant ex-

ercise when the new parliament will be faced with more pressing problems of employment, housing, education, health and agriculture.

My own conversations with other heads of government from Europe and Africa persuade me that the very restoration of the Scottish Parliament next year will greatly enhance Scotland's profile in the world, to the tangible benefit of our trade and industry.

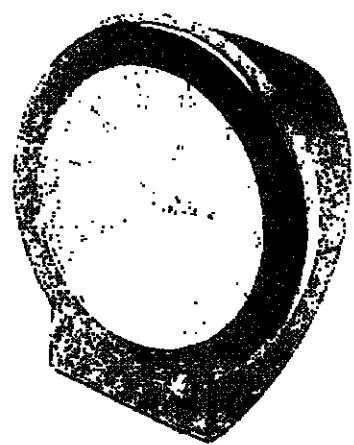
We do not need to imitate the Republic of Ireland. I mean no disrespect to them when I say that their global influence is limited to representation in 41 countries, compared with 153 for the UK. Nor will you find, in Eire, Air Force bases to match Leuchars. Kinloss and Lossiemouth.

We should concentrate in the future in continuing to export the best of the Scottish ethos - thrift, hard work, innovation, sturdy egalitarianism, high-quality education, pioneering in medicine, Scottish football and rugby and the arts can play their part.

The task of the Scottish Parliament will be to provide focus and voice for that identity.

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صكرا من الامل

Deadly cost of a degrading act

WE ARE now in the endgame, the final bankruptcy of Western policy towards Iraq, the very last throw of the dice. We fire 200 cruise missiles into Iraq and what do we expect? Is a chastened Saddam Hussein going to emerge from his bunker to explain to us how sorry he is? Will he tell us how much he wants those nice UN inspectors to return to Baghdad to find his "weapons of mass destruction"? Is that what we think? Is that what the Anglo-American bombardment is all about? And if so, what happens afterwards? What happens when the missile attacks end - just before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, because, of course, we really are very sensitive about Iraqi religious feelings - and Saddam Hussein tells us that the UN inspectors will never be allowed to return?

As the cruise missiles were launched, President Clinton announced that Saddam had "disarmed the UN inspectors", and Tony Blair - agonising about the lives of the "British forces" involved (all 14 pilots) - told us that "we act because we must". In so infantile a manner did we go to war on Wednesday night. No policies. No perspective. Not the slightest hint as to what happens after the bombardment ends. With no UN inspectors back in Iraq, what are we going to do? Declare eternal war against Iraq?

We are "punishing" Saddam - or so Mr Blair would have us believe. And all the old clichés are being trundled out. In 1985, just before he bombed them, Ronald Reagan told the Libyans that the United States had "no quarrel with the Libyan people". In 1991, just before he bombed them, George Bush told the Iraqis that he had "no quarrel with the Iraqi people". And now we have Tony Blair - as he bombs them - telling Iraqis that, yes, he has "no quarrel with the Iraqi people".

Is there a computer that churns out this stuff? Is there a cliché department at Downing Street which also provides Robin Cook with the tired phrase of the American Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, about how Saddam used gas "against his own people"?

For little did we care when he did use that gas against the Kurds of Halabja - because, at the time, those Kurds were allied to Iran and we, the West, were supporting Saddam's invasion of Iran.

The lack of any sane long-term policy towards Iraq is the giveaway. Our patience - according to Clinton and Blair - is exhausted. Saddam cannot be trusted to keep his word (they've just realised). And so Saddam's ability to "threaten his neighbours" - neighbours who don't in fact want us to bomb Iraq - has to be "degraded". That word "degraded" is a military term, first used by General Schwarzkopf and his boys in the 1991 Gulf war. It is now part of the vocabulary of the weak. Saddam's weapons of mass destruction have to be "degraded". Our own dear Mr Cook was



ROBERT FISK
If the inspectors couldn't find the weapons, how come we know where to fire the cruise missiles?

at it again yesterday, informing us of the need to "degrade" Saddam's military capability. How? The UN weapons inspectors - led for most of the time by Scott Ritter (the man who has admitted he kept flying to Israel to liaise with Israeli military intelligence), could not find out where Saddam's nuclear, biological and chemical weapons were hidden. They had been harassed by Iraq's intelligence thugs, and prevented from doing their work. Now we are bombing the weapons facilities which the inspectors could not find. Or are we? For there is a very serious question that is not being asked: if the inspectors couldn't find the weapons, how come we know where to fire the cruise missiles?

And all the while, we continue to impose genocidal sanctions on Iraq, sanctions that are killing innocent Iraqis and - by the admission of Mr Cook and Mrs Albright - not harming Saddam at all. Mrs Albright rages at Saddam's ability to go on building palaces, and Mr Cook is obsessed with a report of the regime's purchase of liposuction equipment which, if true, merely proves that sanctions are a total failure.

Mr Cook prattles on about how Iraq can sell more than \$10bn (£6bn) of oil a year to pay for food, medicine and other humanitarian goods. But since more than 30 per cent of these oil revenues are diverted to the UN compensation fund and UN expenses in Iraq, his statement is totally untrue.

Dennis Halliday, the man who ran the UN oil-for-food programme in Baghdad, until he realised that thousands of Iraqi children were dying every month because of sanctions, resigned his post with the declaration that "we are in the process of destroying an entire society... it is illegal and immoral." So either Mr Halliday is a pathological liar - which I do not believe - or Mr Cook has a serious problem with the truth - which I do believe.

Now we are bombing the people who are suffering under our sanctions. Not to mention the small matter of the explosion of child cancer in southern Iraq, most probably as a result of the Allied use of depleted uranium shells during the 1991 war. Gulf war veterans may be afflicted with the same sickness, although

the British Government refuses to contemplate the possibility. And what, in this latest strike, are some of our warheads made of? Depleted uranium, of course.

Maybe there really is a plan afoot for a coup d'état, though hopefully more ambitious than our call to the Iraqi people to rise up against their dictator in 1991, when they were abandoned by the Allies they thought would speed to their rescue. Mr Clinton says he wants a democracy in Iraq - as fanciful a suggestion as any made recently. He is demanding an Iraqi government that "represents its people" and "respects" its citizens. Not a single Arab regime - especially not Washington's friends in Saudi Arabia - offers such luxuries to its people. We are supposed to believe, it seems, that Washington and London are terribly keen to favour the Iraqi people with a fully fledged democracy. In reality, what we want in Iraq is another bullying dictator - but one who will do as he is told, invade the countries we wish to see invaded (Iran), and respect the integrity of those countries we do not wish to see invaded (Kuwait).

Yet no questions are being asked, no lies uncovered. Ritter, the Marine Corps inspector who worked with Israeli intelligence, claimed that Richard Butler - the man whose report triggered this week's new war - was aware of his visits to Israel. Is that true? Has anyone asked Mr Butler? He may well have avoided such contacts - but it would be nice to have an answer.

So what to do with Saddam? Well, first, we could abandon the wicked sanctions regime against Iraq. We have taken enough innocent lives. We have killed enough children. Then we could back the real supporters of democracy in Iraq - not the ghouls and spooks who make up the so-called Iraqi National Congress, but the genuine dissidents who gathered in Beirut in 1991 to demand freedom for their country, but were swiftly ignored by the Americans once it became clear that they didn't want a pro-Western strongman to lead them.

And we could stop believing in Washington. Vice-President Al Gore told Americans yesterday that it was a time for "national resolve and unity". You might have thought that the Japanese had just bombed Pearl Harbor, or that General MacArthur had just abandoned Bataan. When President Clinton faced the worst of the Monica Lewinsky scandal, he bombed Afghanistan and Sudan. Faced with impeachment, he now bombs Iraq. How far can a coincidence go?

This week, two Christian armies - America's and Britain's - went to war with a Muslim nation, Iraq. With no goals, but with an army of platitudes, they have abandoned the UN's weapons control system, closed the door on arms inspections, and opened the door to an unlimited military offensive against Iraq. And nobody has asked the obvious question: what happens next?



Iraqi women and children amid the wreckage left by Wednesday night's bombing raids Reuters

RIGHT OF REPLY

ERNEST REA



The head of BBC Religion denies that the corporation has neglected its Christmas duty

I MUST respond to the Bishop of St Albans' complaint about the lack of provision of an act of worship by the BBC on Christmas Day.

Religious programming is at the heart of the BBC's Christmas offering, with BBC Religion providing 82 programmes, 51 hours of broadcasting over Advent and Christmas. In fact the BBC is the only national broadcaster to provide (on BBC Radio 4) a live church service on Christmas morning.

We are also broadcasting Carols from King's College, Cambridge, on TV and radio on Christmas Eve, along with the traditional Watchnight Service from St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh on BBC1.

On Christmas Day, BBC1 offers Celebrate Christmas, a broad-appeal religious-based programme. This aims to make the Christmas message accessible to the many viewers who do not attend church but who wish to celebrate this important occasion.

It is a sad fact of life that church attendance is falling and our research indicates there is a limited demand for televised church services, which do not attract large numbers of viewers.

Programmes like Songs of Praise, however, achieve audiences of millions through a successful mix of old and new hymns, interviews and celebrity contributions. We have chosen to follow this formula for BBC1 on Christmas Day for the past six years, and viewers this year are promised a moving celebration of the story of Christ's birth through beautiful pictures and glorious music. Those who want a traditional service can listen to our radio broadcast from the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool.

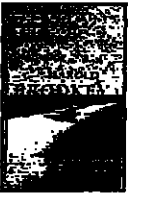
The quality and range of BBC religious broadcasting is unmatched and aims to meet the needs of all.

A stylist in search of style

AT THE end of *This Wild Darkness*, an account of his battle with Aids, Harold Brodkey wrote that "if I had to give up what I've written in order to be clear of this disease, I wouldn't do it". Whether this represents a declaration of faith in the value of literature or simply in his own identity as a writer is unclear. Either way, Brodkey affirmed the role of the artist in a way that has largely passed from fashion.

He was born in Illinois in 1930. Two years later, his mother died and he became withdrawn and mute, emerging from a long period of silence as a prodigy. He was brought up in Missouri and educated at Harvard before moving to New York in 1953. His early stories appeared in *The New Yorker*, with which he enjoyed a lifelong association, and his first collection was published in 1957. For the next three decades, he was more famous for what he had not written than for what he had. He tantalised readers with the work-in-progress that became *The Runaway Soul*, his attempt at the Great American Novel.

The 29 years of the book's composition made him the reported inspiration for Victor Propp in



FRIDAY BOOK

THE WORLD IS THE HOME OF LOVE AND DEATH
BY HAROLD BRODKEY, FOURTH ESTATE, £12.99

Jay McInerney's novel, *Brightness Falls*, whose "reputation grew with each book he failed to publish". When it finally appeared in 1990, it proved a huge disappointment, self-conscious in style and self-obsessed in subject. One critic opined that "Death would have been a smarter career move". Neither his second, shorter novel, *Profane Friendship*, nor *This Wild Darkness* succeeded in silencing the doubters. So a great deal hangs on this final return to the form in which his reputation was made.

With the single exception of "What I Do For Money", which concerns a redundant executive suffering from a brain tumour, all 11 stories in this posthumous collection involve characters

and conflicts from *The Runaway Soul* - so much so that they start to seem like offcuts from that novel. In two of them, "Spring Fugue" and "Religion", the narrator is not named but, in both, he is recognisable as Wiley, Brodkey's fictional alter-ego, the mid-Western Jewish boy turned New York writer.

In the other stories, the links are more direct as Wiley is reunited with his mismatched adoptive parents, Lila and SL, his disturbed elder sister, Nonie, and his WASP girlfriend, Ora. The order is loosely chronological, starting with the infant Wiley's observation of the battle of wills that passes for affection between his mother and a woman friend ("The Bullies"), continuing through the tortured relationships suffered by the Silenowicz family and ending with two stories ("Dumbness is Everything" and "A Guest in the Universe") that show the older Wiley as a party animal.

The key to Brodkey's fictional world is found in *This Wild Darkness*, where he asserts that "I think of childhood and adolescence as sexual, as filled with the sexual intrusion of others". This is a world where no one respects anyone's boundaries and people are subject to constant assaults, emotional and physical. Adults use sexuality as a means of power over both themselves and their children. There is no innocence in Wiley's upbringing. Lila flirts with him as she washes him ("Do you love me? I'm a charmer"); Uncle Simon gropes him while assessing his muscular development; and the dying SL propositions him more directly, kissing the 14-year-old boy on the lips and following him into the lavatory ("You don't know the meaning of co-operate").

The explanation for the vast gulf between Brodkey's ambition and achievement can be discovered in the final story, set among Manhattan's "Upper Bohemians", where he writes that "Proust, in this set, was supposedly the best novelist ever". That pre-eminence

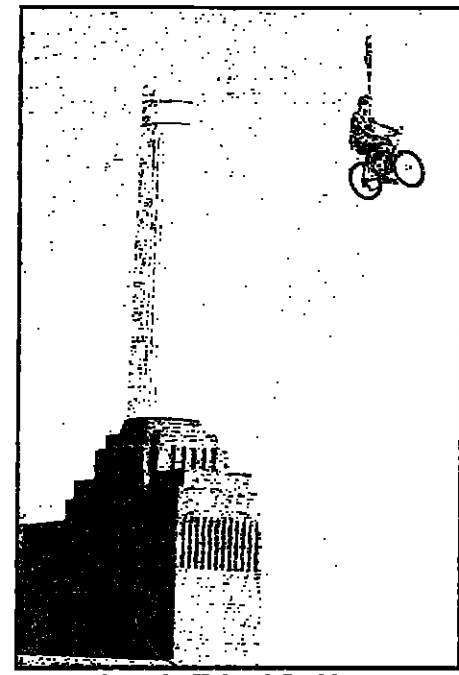


Harold Brodkey in 1991 Nicholas Turpin

may be justified, but the master's influence on Brodkey was disastrous. While Proust's genius lies in the balance he maintains between the interior and exterior life, Brodkey destroys that balance in favour of the former. His monomania is monumental. His reflection on Ora that "I never liked the way she kissed unless I directed her" seems indicative of his feelings towards the world. He does not appear to write in order to share experience so much as to own it. This is most apparent in his style, where the attempt to put consciousness into words flounders as the words overwhelm consciousness. However worthy the endless worrying at detail may be, the reader begins to wish that Brodkey would not agonise so laboriously in public but settle for an adjective beforehand. His model may be French, but he resembles less an American Proust than a literary equivalent of the Pompidou Centre, highlighting those elements that other writers keep out of sight.

MICHAEL ARDITTI

THE INDEPENDENT PHOTOGRAPH



Bungee Jump by Kalpesh Lathigra Ref: 00110

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FRIDAY POEM

VIRUS ***
BY JACKIE KAY

No that Am saying Am no grateful. Am aye grateful tae ma hosts, awratime, and if by any chance ma host the rat snuffs it, A kin a ways switch tack. Big man, wee woman, wean: it's awrasame tae me. Don't get me wrang, Am no aw that choosy, as lang as the flesh is guld and juicy. One bite and Am in,	one bite and they're mine in the neck, the groin. Whit! Ma success rate is naeboddy's business. Wey ma canny disguise A make sure human hosts drap like flies. Bubol! It's all go. O sweet Christ. Sweet blood bodies. Somebody's dochter. Somebody's Maw.
--	--

Our poems until 8 January come from the 10 volumes shortlisted for this year's TS Eliot Prize, to be announced on 11 January. Jackie Kay's 'Off Colour' is published by Bloodaxe (£5.95)

**Sur la PISTE de
l'EXPLOIT
RIRE et SUSPENS**

He appeared in America for seven years with "The Greatest Show on Earth", the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus. During this time, Nock sustained a fall from 10 metres up on the wire. He fell directly into the wild animal cage containing a dozen or more fierce lions and lionesses and it was only thanks to the quick actions of the trainer Wolfgang Holzmair,



A 1966 poster depicting Nock performing his high-wire act

D. NEVIL

Pius "Pio" Nock, clown and high-wire performer: born Berne, Switzerland 10 November 1921; married 1946 Alexandra Bühlmann (died 1998; two sons, one daughter); died Dortmund, Germany 4 December 1998.

up 13 German prisoners and was mentioned in despatches. His career blossomed in the world of what some called cloak-and-dagger work but which were officially Irregular Operations under their own Deputy Director in the Operations Division. Based near Dartmouth on the Helston River, and

Ronald Franklin Seddon, naval officer: born Liverpool 14 December 1917; married 1946 Luca Kaplan (died 1969; two sons, one daughter); died London 18 October 1998.

mentor, and a devoted husband and father who wrote weekly to his children and enjoyed yearly reunions with all of them. He took great pride in sharing his knowledge and love of literature with several generations of students.

CONRAD SORDINO
Mark Eccles, Shakespeare scholar:
born Oxford, Ohio 13 July 1905;
married; died Madison, Wisconsin
9 November 1982.

The Orthodox believe that all saints and holy men know by revelation when they are about to die. A month before his death, Cleopa came out of his little house and, from its porch, told the dozen pilgrims who had come to hear him: "This is the last time I will preach to you. I have to prepare myself for death." For the faithful in Romania, this was further proof of Cleopa's holy life.

FELIX CORLEY

Constantin Ilie-Tirlea, monk:
born Sukita, Romania 10 April
1912; professed a monk 1937 as
Brother Cleopa; ordained priest
1945; died Sîbăstria, Romania 2
December 1998.



I am Uncle Mouldy

[illegible]

سكنا من الاول

DAY REVIEW

Mark
Coles

Butch McDade

IN THE Seventies, the rootsy sound and humorous songwriting of the Amazing Rhythm Aces earned them unlikely hits with "Third Rate Romance", "Amazing Grace (Used to Be Her Favorite Song)" and "The End is Not in Sight (The Cowboy Tune)", the latter a 1977 Grammy-winner for best country vocal performance by a duo or group.

"Butch" McDade, the group's drummer and second vocalist, was born in 1946 and was educated at the Marion Military Institute and the University of Tennessee. He decided to become a drummer after hearing a James Brown record, and made his debut while in the second grade, with a rhythm band.

By 1972, he had met the bass-player Jeff "Stick" Davis and Russell Smith, a vocalist and guitarist. They got a gig backing the singer-songwriter Jesse Winchester, who took a liking to two of Smith's compositions, "Third Rate Romance" and "The End is Not in Sight", and decided to include them on his album *Learn to Love It* (1974).

Winchester, in order to dodge his US draft, settled in Canada, and so touring opportunities were limited. McDade and Davis soon moved back to Nashville and hooked up again with Russell Smith who brought along a keyboard player, Billy Earheart III. With Barry Burton (guitar, mandolin) and James Hooker (keyboards), they became the Amazing Rhythm Aces.

Their fine musicianship and mix of country, rock, gospel and rhythm 'n' blues soon attracted record company interest and they signed to ABC Records. In 1975, they released their debut album, *Stacked Deck*. The smooth single "Third Rate Romance" attracted massive airplay and rose up the country charts before crossing over to the pop market and becoming a Top Fifteen hit.

The sextet never again equalled that success, although their second single, "Amazing Grace (Used to Be Her Favorite Song)", reached the country Top Ten. After five further albums (*Toucan Do It Too*, *Burning the Ballroom Down*, *The Amazing Rhythm Aces* and *How the Hell Do You Spell Rhythm?*), the group - often described as too rock for country and too country for rock - broke up in 1980.

"Back then, you couldn't make an album on your own, because of the technology. You had to have a big, hungry machine behind it because it was so expensive. Then you'd go out on the road and work yourself to death, and every dime you made went to pay back the machine. That's the main reason we split up; we were killing ourselves out there and not even earning a living," recalls Russell Smith.

Butch McDade kept busy, touring and recording with the likes of Leon Russell, Lonnie Mack, Roy Clark and Tanya Tucker, and also running a restaurant and working as a sports writer for his local paper.

By the mid-Nineties, fans were clam-



McDade (back row, second from left) in 1979 with the Amazing Rhythm Aces

ouring to get Amazing Rhythm Aces favourites on compact disc. Since their back catalogue was tied up in legal wranglings, the band decided to cut new versions of "Third Rate Romance", "King of the Cowboys" and McDade's poignant composition "Last Letter Home". The resulting collection, issued in 1994 on their own Breaker label and entitled *Ride Again*, sold so well in the US, Australia and New Zealand that the group began touring again.

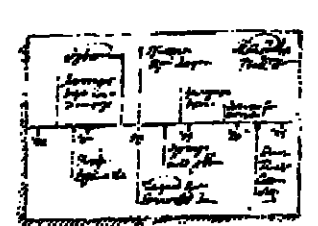
Last year, they recorded *Out of the*

Blue, an album of new material, including two excellent songs by McDade, "Oh, Lucky Me" and "Get Down", on which he sang lead. By the time the band took to the road earlier this year, McDade had been diagnosed with bladder cancer and did not join them on their first European trip. They received rave reviews for concerts in Switzerland, Ireland and Britain (at the Borderline, in London). Russell Smith said: "There was never a thought of naming a full-time replacement. People have always

said there's something other than the musical nuts and bolts that makes the Aces special, and a whole lot of that was due to him. Every time he hit a drum, it sounded like he meant it."

PIERRE PERRONE

David Hugh ("Butch") McDade, drummer, singer, songwriter; born Clarksdale, Missouri 24 February 1946; twice married (one son, one daughter); died Maryville, Tennessee 29 November 1998.



HISTORICAL NOTES MICHAEL HICKEY

A traumatic attempt to free Constantinople

THE RECENT 80th anniversary of the Armistice drew attention, not unnaturally, to the immense casualties sustained on the Western Front, where the combatants were deadlocked for nearly three years. But in 1915 an attempt was made to untie the Gordian knot by forcing the Dardanelles, inserting an Anglo-French fleet into the Sea of Marmara, and using its guns to force Turkey out of the war, gain access to the beleaguered Russians via the Bosphorus, and collapse the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty in Asquith's Liberal Cabinet, was fervently in favour of this strategy of indirect approach. His professional head of the Royal Navy, the astonishingly septuagenarian Jacky Fisher, was decidedly not, resigning in high dudgeon in June 1915, by which time a purely naval attempt to overwhelm the Chanak defences had failed disastrously and an Allied expeditionary force under General Sir Ian Hamilton was stranded and wiling under ferocious Turkish opposition.

Hamilton had been sent to the eastern Mediterranean by Kitchener, Asquith's improbable choice as War Minister, with hopelessly inadequate resources; all priorities went to the Western Front. In August, three raw divisions of the so-called Kitchener Army were sent to

Gallipoli, landing in Suvla Bay to divert Turkish attention from what Hamilton hoped would be the decisive assault on the commanding high ground of the Chunuk Bair ridge. At the same time the remnants of the British 29th Division bravely attacked at Helles; they were mown down. Two weeks later a last-gasp attack failed bloodily: hundreds of our wounded, lying before the enemy trenches in the scrub, were incinerated when it took fire. Naval gunfire support fell away after two British battleships had been torpedoed off the beaches in full view of the appalled troops ashore. Only the supreme gallantry of British and French submarine crews redeemed what the army saw as their desertion by the fleet.

British participation at Gallipoli has tended to be marginalised by the performance of the Australian and New Zealand troops - the Anzacs - whose astonishing gallantry and endurance rightly gained the admiration of all who saw it. However, the British and French lost over 40,000 men between them.

It is hard to see what would have resulted had the Allies reached Constantinople; almost certainly an unseemly struggle between Greeks and Russians over the reinstatement of the Orthodox Patriarchate in Saint Sofia and this alone would have diverted Allied attention from the aim of

destroying Germany's allies in the Balkans. As it was, Romania rashly plunged into the war on the side of the Entente months after the Anglo-French forces had been successfully and bloodlessly evacuated from Gallipoli; a move for which she paid a bitter price.

The Allied attempt to free Constantinople failed on many grounds. The fighting capacity of the Turks was dismissed. In London, intelligence had been pigeon-holed and ignored. There was no joint control from Whitehall over naval and land operations. Hamilton was thus Commander-in-Chief in name only. There was a chronic shortage of field artillery and ammunition. Several of the generals turned out to be insensitive brutes, others were duds. Disease wrought havoc in the ranks; an unexpected cold spell in the autumn caused thousands of casualties.

Yet all was not disaster: not all the generals were hopeless old fools. Lessons were learned which (even if the errors were paraded again in Norway in 1940) enabled the success of Overlord in 1944. And this traumatic affair is still seen as the birthplace of three national identities: Australia, New Zealand and above all, Turkey.

Michael Hickey is the author of *Gallipoli* (John Murray, £15.99)

No general immunity for advice to settle

THERE WAS no general rule on the question of a lawyer's immunity from liability for negligence in advising a client to settle a case.

The Court of Appeal allowed three of four appeals which had been listed and heard together, but dismissed the fourth.

The following questions of law had arisen on the appeals: the extent and circumstances in which a lawyer's immunity from suit in relation to the allegedly negligent conduct of a case in court protected him against claims for allegedly negligent acts and omissions which had taken place out of court; whether a lawyer, if not otherwise immune from a claim in negligence by a client, became so when the court approved a consent order; particularly in matrimonial proceedings in relation to ancillary relief; and whether in such circumstances, it was an abuse of the process of the court to claim damages against a lawyer for alleged negligence leading to the making of a consent order.

Rupert Jackson QC, Norman Wright and Stan Mirchandani (Weightmans, Liverpool) for Arthur J.S. Hall & Co; Andrew Edis QC (Hill Dickinson Davis Campbell, Liverpool) for Mr Simons; Martin Painter QC and Stephen Trowell (Cooper Whitehead) for Mr Barrett; Lord Meston QC and Rupert Jackson QC (Reynolds Porter Chamberlain) for Woolf Seddon; Mr Cockbone appeared in person; Rupert Jackson QC and Christopher Critchlow (Wansbroughs Willey Hargrave, Leeds) for Atkinson Dacre & Slack; Peter Duckworth and Nicholas Bowen (Stephens &

FRIDAY LAW REPORT 18 DECEMBER 1998

Arthur J.S. Hall & Co (a firm) v Simons and other appeals

Court of Appeal (Lord Bingham, Lord Chief Justice, Lord Justice Morritt and Lord Justice Waller) 14 December 1998

Scotlen, Exeter) for Mr Harris; Rupert Jackson QC and Jeffrey Bacon (Bond Pearce, Exeter) for Scholfield Roberts & Hill.

Lord Bingham CJ said that the main features of the law in a case where a legal adviser sought to restrain further prosecution of proceedings against him by a plaintiff for whom he had acted in an earlier case, and who claimed that his negligence had led to an outcome less favourable than the plaintiff would and should have achieved but for the negligence, were as follows.

The first question was whether the plaintiff's claim represented an abusive collateral challenge to the earlier judgment of the court: if it did, the claim would ordinarily be dismissed or struck out.

In deciding that question it was always necessary to consider the nature and effect of the earlier judgment, the nature and basis of the claim made in

the later proceedings, and any grounds relied on to justify the collateral challenge, if it was found to be such.

Where the later proceedings did constitute a collateral attack they might, and ordinarily would be an abuse of the process unless the plaintiff could properly allege a breach of duty which either deprived him of a reasonable opportunity of appreciating that better terms were available whether on settlement or at a contested hearing, or placed him in the position of having to accept a settlement significantly less advantageous or more disadvantageous than he should have had.

A plaintiff seeking to mount a collateral challenge to an earlier judgment or order would be required to explain why steps had not been taken to set aside or challenge the judgment or order complained of in the original proceedings; it would never be enough that the plaintiff was suffering from post-settlement remorse.

Pending reconsideration of *Rondel v Worsley* [1967] 3 All ER 993 and *Staff v Ali v Sydney Mitchell & Co (a firm)* [2000] 1 All ER 1033 by the House of Lords, the ratio of those cases was binding on lower courts.

There could be no general rule that a lawyer was or was not immune from liability in advising a client to settle a case, and immunity did not depend on when or where such advice was given. All depended on the advice given, the reason for it and the complaint made about it.

KATE O'HANLON Barrister

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

BIRTHS

CLARKE: Tiny and Megan are pleased to announce the safe arrival on 13 December of Elias Edward, brother for Freya and Idris.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries. In memoriam) are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, functions, forthcoming marriages, Marriages), which must be submitted in writing, are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. Always include a daytime telephone number.

The Independent's main switchboard number is 0171-293 2000.

The OBITUARIES e-mail address is obituaries@independent.co.uk

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion The Duke of Wellington's Regiment mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Irish Guards.

BIRTHDAYS

Mr Harold Best MP, 59; Field Marshal Lord Bramall, Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London, 75; Miss Frances Crook, director, Howard League for Penal Reform, 46; Mr Jules Dassin, film director, 86; Lt-Cdr Ian Fraser VC, 78; Mr Christopher Fry, playwright, 91; Pamela, Lady Harlech, journalist and producer, 64; Professor Michael Harrison, Vice-Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton, 57; Miss Rosemary Leach, actress, 63; Mr Romeo LeBlanc, Governor General of Canada, 71; Lord Loft-house of Pontefract, former MP 73; Lord MacLean, a Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 60; Lord Merlyn-Rees, former Home Secretary, 78; Mr Muhammad Ali, boxer, 55; Mr John Mott, former chairman, William Sindall, 72; Mr Albert Pacey, director-general, National Criminal Intelligence Service, 60; Miss Annette Page, ballerina, 66; Dr Joyce Reynolds, historian, 80; Mr Keith Richards, guitarist with the Rolling Stones, 55; Lord Robens of Woldingham, former chairman, Coal Board and Vickers, 88; The Earl of Shrewsbury, former joint Deputy Chairman, Britannia Building Society, 46; Mr Steven Spielberg, film producer and director, 51; Sir Christopher Stuart-White, High Court judge, 65; Mr Dick Thomson, ambassador to the Dominican Republic, 56; Miss Arantza Sanchez Vicario, tennis player, 27; Mr Joe Wade, former trade union leader, 79; The Right Rev Roy Williamson, Bishop of Southwark, 66.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Ludolf Backhuysen, painter, 1631; Charles Wesley, hymn-writer of "Jesus, Lover of My Soul", 1707; Joseph Grimaldi, clown, 1779; Viktor Kazynski, composer, 1812; Dr William Moon, inventor of "blind" alphabet, 1818; Abraham Viktor Rydberg, philosopher and poet, 1828; Sir Joseph John Thomson, physicist, 1856; Francis Thompson, poet, 1859; Edward Alexander MacDowell, composer and pianist, 1860; Saki (Hector Hugh Munro), short-story writer, 1870; Paul Klee, abstract painter, 1879; Dame Gladys Cooper, actress, 1888; Cuthbert Orde, painter, 1888; Edwin Howard Armstrong, engineer and inventor of FM radio, 1890; Willy Brandt (Herbert Ernst Karl Frahm), former West German Chancellor, 1913; Betty (Elizabeth Ruth) Grable, actress, 1916.

Deaths: Abu Mohammed al-Ghazali, Islamic theologian, 1111; Robert Nanteuil, engraver, 1678; Veit Ludwig von Seckendorf, political writer, 1692; Antonio Stradivari, violin maker, 1737; Johann Gottfried von Herder, theologian and philosopher, 1803; Dr Alexander Adam, classic scholar and teacher, 1809; Thomas Dunham Whitaker, topographer, 1821; Jean-Baptiste Pierre-Antoine Monnet, Chevalier de Lamarck, zoologist, 1829; Marie Louise, archduchess of Parma, empress, 1847; Samuel Rogers, poet and banker, 1855; Louis Moreau Gottschalk, composer, 1869; Philipp Veit, painter, 1877; George Edmund Street, architect, 1881; Sir Richard Owen, palaeontologist, 1892;

Sir John William Alcock, aviator, killed in an air crash 1919; Horatio Parker, composer, 1919; Sir William Hamo Thornycroft, sculptor, 1925; Hugo Henkel, chemist, 1952; Dorothy Leigh Sayers, detective story writer, 1957; Robert Tyne (Bobby) Jones, champion golfer, 1971; Alexei Nikolayevich Kosygin, Russian leader, 1980; Ben Travers, writer of farces, 1980; Marguerite Yourcenar (Marguerite de Crayencourt), historical novelist, 1987; Sam Wanamaker (Samuel Watenmaker), actor, director and producer, 1993.

On this day: the Scots were defeated at the Battle of Clifton Moor, 1745; New Jersey became the third of the United States, 1787; Thomas Paine, who had fled to France, was tried in his absence for his publication of *The Rights of Man*, 1793; the first stones of the piers of Blackfriars Railway Bridge, London, were laid, 1865; under the 13th Amendment, slavery was abolished in the United States, 1865; the underground railway from Stockwell to the City of London was opened, 1890; Frederick, Lord Lugard occupied Uganda for the British East Africa Company, 1890; a treaty between the US and Panama placed the Canal under US control for an annual rent, 1903; the US Congress prohibited the entry of illiterate immigrants, 1912; Edvard Benes succeeded Tomas Masaryk as president of Czechoslovakia, 1935; the French newspaper *Le Monde* was issued for the first time, 1944; after discussion in the House of Lords, the death penalty for murder was abolished, 1969;

Stanley Barrett became the first man to break the sound barrier on land, driving in California at 739.6 mph, 1979.

Today is the Feast Day of St Flannan, St Gatian, Saints Rufus and Zosimus, St Samthan and St Winebald.

LECTURES

National Gallery: Marion Carlisle, Rebecca Lyons, Colin Wiggins, "Christmas Round Robin", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Matthew Cock, "Some 19th-century Photographs", 2pm.

DINNERS

Byron Society The Annual Christmas Dinner of the Byron Society was held yesterday evening at St Ermin's Hotel, London SW1. Dr Fiona MacCarthy spoke on "Lord Byron's Christmases". Mr Geoffrey Bond was in the chair. Mr Michael Foot and Mr John Murray also spoke.

SYNAGOGUE SERVICES

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 3.37pm.

United Synagogues: 0181-343 8989. Federation of Synagogues: 0181-202 2283. Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 0171-580 1663. Reform Synagogues of Great Britain: 0181-349 4731. Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation: 0171-289 2573. New London Synagogue (Masorti): 0171-328 1026.

The year the Universe expanded

Steve Connor reviews
Science journal's top 10
research breakthroughs
of 1998, which
have increased our
understanding of life, the
Universe, and everything

Breakthrough of the Year - the expanding Universe

This has been the year when Albert Einstein was proved right - again. Two independent teams of astronomers were studying far-off exploding stars, known as supernovae, when they witnessed a phenomenon that they found difficult to believe. Einstein had made a theoretical prediction of something similar 80 years before and he, too, had dismissed it as being impossible.

The astronomers found that the supernovae were further away than expected, indicating that the Universe in general was expanding at a faster rate than it should be as a result of the Big Bang explosion some 10 to 15 billion years ago. The simplest explanation for this was that there is some hitherto unexplained energy that is repelling objects on a cosmic scale, effectively counteracting and overriding the tendency of stars and galaxies to attract one another under the force of gravity.

In 1917 Einstein completed his general theory of relativity. He found that one consequence of his calculations was that the Universe must be expanding. At that time, 12 years before Edwin P. Hubble, the great American astronomer, demonstrated that stars really were moving apart, scientists believed the Universe was neither expanding nor contracting, but was in a steady state. As a consequence, Einstein inserted a "fudge factor" into his equations, which he called the cosmological constant, to make his theory conform to the "reality" of a Universe that was not expanding. When Hubble showed he need not have bothered, Einstein said it was "the greatest blunder of my life".

However, even the followers of modern cosmology had assumed that gravity must still have an influence on the explosive forces repelling the stars and galaxies. They thought the expansion would slow down; there is even a school of cosmology who believes that one day the expansion will end and the Universe will begin to contract in what some have dubbed the Big Crunch.

This year's new observations of distant supernovae have dispelled this idea totally. These implications are so profound and unsettling that astronomers around the world are still trying to disprove the finding, to uncover anything that could cause a false impression of cosmic acceleration, *Science* says.

The two international teams of astronomers found that the supernovae they observed were between 10 and 15 per cent further away than expected, indicating that the expansion of the Universe has accelerated over billions of years. Data from the research suggests that about 70 per cent of the total energy in the Universe is made up of this mysterious element. The remaining 30 per cent is the matter making up stars and galaxies.

As *Science* says: "Einstein is proved right, albeit for reasons he could not have foreseen."

Runner-up: the ultimate clock of life

This was the Year of the Clock. A series of experiments from several independent groups of scientists shed some much-needed light on the clockwork mechanisms governing the daily biorhythms of life. Perhaps the most amazing find of all is that the body clocks of fruit flies and mice - which have been separated by 700 million years of evolutionary history - share a similar timekeeping system.

Many different kinds of animals, including humans, have a circadian rhythm, meaning

they exhibit periods of rest and activity that run on a roughly 24-hour cycle. A number of genes are known to be involved in the biorhythms of mammals. In fruit flies the "clock" gene becomes active during the morning and switches on two other genes, called "per" and "tim".

When these two genes become active and produce their own proteins, they eventually switch themselves off, and the cycle is complete. But to keep themselves tuned in to the 24-hour cycle, this turn-off must not happen too soon after the genes are turned on.

This year scientists found that the delay in flies is caused by another gene, called "doubletime". The protein made by the "doubletime" gene destabilises the "per" gene's protein. Eventually, enough of the "tim" protein accumulates to bind with the "per" protein and so shield it from "doubletime's" destabilising influence. Precisely the same delay tactics occur in bacteria and mice, suggesting that the mechanism, or a derivative of it, may even operate in human beings.

Keeping the timing mechanism accurate, like a daily adjustment of a clock that runs slightly fast or slow, was known to involve light. This year also saw how this might work. Scientists found that light causes the rapid destruction of "tim" proteins in flies. In humans, light is also known to be critical in determining the bio-clock's accuracy, but scientists have found, most surprisingly, that instead of working through the eyes, light shone on to the back of the knees seems to be able to reset the clock.

How to transmit a brainwave

Every simple activity, such as reading a book or driving a car, requires billions of tiny electrical signals to pass along millions of nerve cells running to and from the brain. How precisely the nerve cells control these signals rests with molecular "gates" that determine which charged particles, or ions, can enter or leave the cell. This year, for the first time, the detailed three-dimensional structure of one of these gates was determined.

Science has called it a landmark discovery because it shows at the molecular level how the gate traps its target ion - in this case potassium - and swings it through the gate at top speed, while blocking the way to any other particles with the same electric charge, such as sodium. "After decades of wondering, electrophysiologists can now understand such riddles as how the potassium channel manages to keep out wrong ions, such as sodium, while shuttling an amazing 100 million potassium ions per second across the membrane," *Science* says.

The secret of the gate is that potassium ions must pass through a narrow filter that is just snug enough for them to cross; this is impossible for the slightly larger sodium ions.

The mass of a neutrino

Neutrinos are mysterious sub-atomic particles that are contenders for being the least interactive matter in the Universe. They are so ghostly that millions of them are thought to pass straight through the Earth on their travels through space. Not surprisingly they have been difficult to detect - until this year.

Japanese physicists deployed their Super-Kamiokande, a 50,000-ton tank of water packed with 11,200 light sensors, to detect the faint glow caused when a neutrino hits a water molecule. Ever since the existence of neutrinos was suggested as a theoretical possibility in the Thirties,

scientists have thought they were devoid of mass and electric charge. But in an announcement in June, the Japanese team said that they had detected neutrinos, and that they do indeed have a "wisp of mass", says *Science*.

The findings raised the possibility that neutrinos, if they have mass, may be at least partly responsible for the missing mass of the Universe - the dark matter that astronomers cannot see with telescopes but which they know must be there because of the gravitational influence that it exerts. "1998 marked a new understanding of the neutrino, but this wily particle is still a few steps ahead of the scientists pursuing it," *Science* says.

Genetic blueprint of the first many-celled animal
It took more than 15 years, and £30m. A joint effort by two teams from Britain and America has resulted in the genetic blueprint being published of the first multicellular animal - a 1mm-long worm called *Caenorhabditis elegans*. The book contains the complete instructions for building the worm - 97 million letters of the genetic alphabet that spell out the 19,000 genes of the animal.

The full sequence would, if printed on paper, be longer than two dozen copies of *War and Peace*. Yet the worm consists of fewer than 1,000 cells and is one of the simplest multicellular animals there is. About 40 per cent of the worm's genes are closely related to those of humans, says John Sulston, who is director of the Sanger Centre in Cambridge and the leader of the British team. "Now we have a better understanding of how an animal is built, we can get some way closer to knowing how the human body works in health and disease."

Beam me up, Scotty
Teleportation, the transmission of matter from one point to another without physically passing through the intervening medium, is the stuff of science fiction. Most people would never have thought that the teleporter in *Star Trek* would ever gain any sort of scientific credibility. But it has done so in 1998.

This year, physicists boldly went where no one has gone before, *Science* says. The scientists reconstructed the quantum state of a particle of light and transmitted it across their laboratory. "The key to teleportation is the odd phenomenon known as quantum entanglement, in which the fates of two or more particles are entwined without physical contact," reports *Science*.

Not many people can understand the intricacies of the experiment, involving as it does the esoteric science of quantum physics, but *Science* believes that this is a major breakthrough. "That technology will be worthy of inclusion in a *Star Trek* episode; it's teleportation, Jim, but not as we know it."

A chip off the block
Nineteen ninety-eight has been the year of a marriage between the silicon-based technology of microelectronics and the carbon-based science of genetics. The result has been the birth of biochips, silicon wafers that can be used to carry out a range of tasks, from sequencing the structure of DNA to genetic diagnosis of inherited diseases.

One biochip just a few centimetres wide looks as though it may soon be used to sequence DNA, scientists having already mastered the art of chopping up the molecule, amplifying it to usable amounts and then separating out the fragments in order of size. "Also this year, researchers at a California biotech firm developed a biochip that can screen a blood sample for cancer cells, bacteria or other cell types and remove their DNA for analysis," *Science* says.

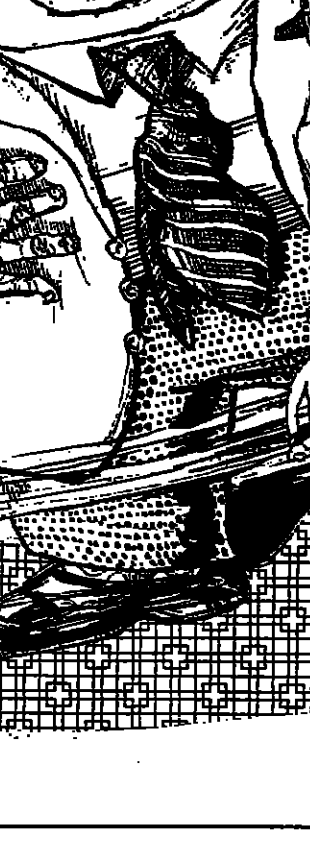
Another class of DNA chips can be used for diagnosing genetic faults. "Such chips could one day screen for genetic disease. Their foundations may be in electronics, but microchips have a bright biomedical future."

A chemical cocktail
Combination chemistry - a way of looking quickly at the result of mingling more than one chemical - became a vogue term in laboratories this year. *Science* calls it a "high-speed discovery engine" which "allows researchers to assemble a handful of chemical building blocks into all possible combinations thousands of times faster than before".

Nearly all pharmaceutical companies have adopted the approach as a fast-track way of finding new drugs. At least two potential drugs, including one to treat inflammations, are now in clinical trials as a result of combination chemistry.

One team has used the technique to generate a "library" of more than 2.1 million complex organic molecules that resemble natural products such as antibiotics.

Instead of testing each of these, the scientists can scan the "library" to find the candidates that look as though they may be best suited to activating or deactivating a target protein in the body that is involved in a particular illness. "When the



goal is to create new compounds, chemists seem to have hit on a winning combination," says *Science*.

The war on cancer continues

The war on cancer is not a single fight but many far-flung skirmishes, and no superweapon has yet emerged to rout the enemy from all its hideouts. Yet, says *Science*, some battles were won this year, although the war on cancer is not over.

Several types of cancer prevention gained respectability in 1998. "Researchers can proudly point to a new use for the drug tamoxifen," *Science* says.

This oestrogen-like drug has already proven to be a success in the treatment of breast cancer and this year was approved in America for the prevention of the disease in women who are thought to be at high risk.

Cancer rates have also been dropping as a result of changes in lifestyle, notably a fall in the numbers of people smoking in some age groups since the early Nineties. Meanwhile, several new approaches to therapy have been tested with some success, such as the antibodies Herceptin, to slow breast cancer, and Panorex, to combat cancer of the colon.

"The war on cancer goes on but physicians now have a few new weapons to fight with," *Science* says.



Molecular mimicry
Some infections appear to have the power to cause long-term effects, but no one has really understood why. Lyme disease, for instance, starts with short-lived effects such as flu-like symptoms but can end up causing chronic arthritis, even after antibiotics have wiped out the microbes. What is going on?

One theory that has gained some support in 1998 is that the infection somehow triggers the immune system to attack the body's own molecules - an auto-immune response. People literally become allergic to themselves. But the idea has been hard to prove. "This year, two teams convincingly linked

infections and auto-immune disorders, paving the way to better understanding of diseases such as diabetes and MS," *Science* says. In the first experiment, scientists showed that mice infected with the herpes virus had the corneas of their eyes destroyed by their own T-cells. The second piece of research found that patients who developed chronic arthritis as an effect of Lyme disease possessed immune cells that attacked both a protein of the Lyme disease bacterium, and a closely related human protein. *Science* said these experiments set the scene for a flood of research to demonstrate further the links between auto-immunity and infection.

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 79 of the Insolvency Act 1986 that Meetings of Creditors of the above named Companies will be held at 10 Palace Avenue, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6NF on 22nd December 1998 at 11.00 am and 11.30 am for the purpose mentioned in Section 99 to 101 of the said Act.

The Resolutions proposed at the Meetings of Creditors may include a Resolution specifying the terms on which the Liquidator or Liquidators are to be remunerated. The Meetings may also resolve information about, or be asked to approve, the cost of preparing the statement of affairs and convening the Meetings of Creditors.

Creditors wishing to vote at the Meetings must lodge their proxy, together with a full statement of account at the registered office - Starlock House, 7 Kennick Place, London W1H 3FF not later than 12.00 noon on 21st December 1998.

For the purposes of voting, a second creditor is required unless he surrenders his security to lodge at Starlock House, 7 Kennick Place, London W1H 3FF between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm on the two business days preceding the date of the meetings stated above.

Notice is further given that a list of the names and addresses of the creditors and of the amounts of their claims may be inspected, free of charge, at Starlock House, 7 Kennick Place, London W1H 3FF between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm on the two business days preceding the date of the meetings stated above.

Dated this 17th day of December 1998
By Order of the Board
GRAHAM SONES, Director

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Rule 4.106 of the Insolvency Rules 1986 that Stephen Furlan of Park, Stokes Foundation & Co, 6 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2LP was appointed Liquidator of the above named Company on 11 December 1998 by Members and Creditors.

Dated 11 December 1998
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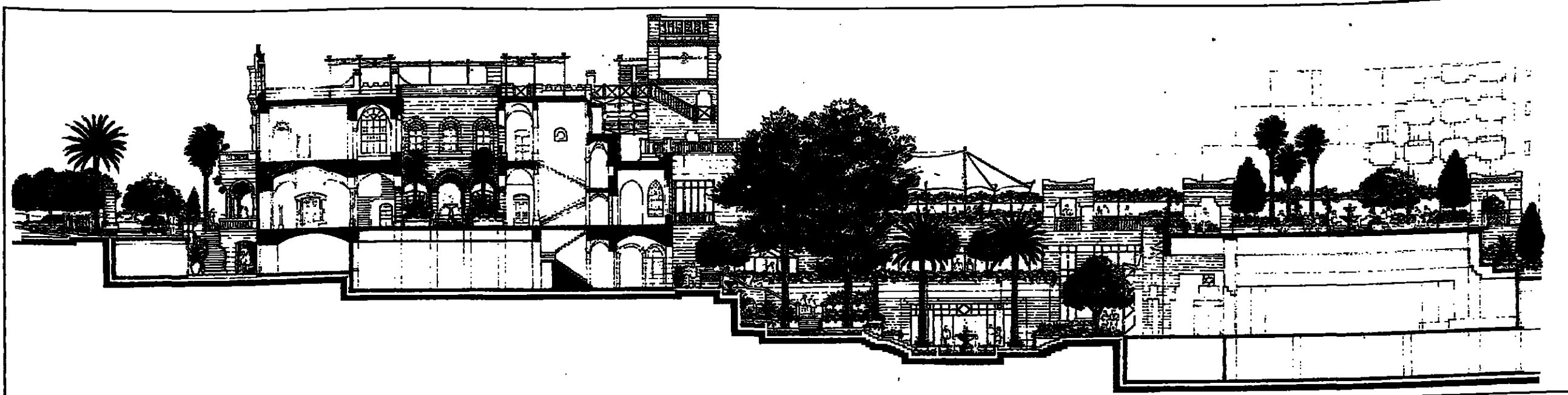
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Above: section through Jasser Palace and the main courtyard, below: section through the outdoor pool area and garden. Olive groves on the sloping site date back to the Nativity



Plenty of room at the inn

Millions of people will head for Bethlehem at the Millennium. And accommodation won't be a problem. By Nonie Niesewand

A former Hizbollah HQ at the birthplace of Christ will be occupied by tourists in king-sized suites, when the new Jasser Palace Hotel opens in time for the Millennium celebrations. Not many towns started their tourist drive with a rave review in the Gospels.

Bethlehem expects over five million tourists in the year 2000. In time-honoured tradition, they will celebrate three Christ-masses in Manger Square: on December 25, when Western Christians observe the Gregorian calendar; on January 5, when the Orthodox Christians look to the Julian calendar; and on January 19, when the Assyrians get to open their presents.

In common with all the territory west of Jordan not occupied by Israel, Bethlehem was annexed to the Kingdom of Jordan after the Second World War. Cut off from the Mediterranean and with tourist access only via Amman, tourism took a nose-dive. Although the town is only a kilometre from Jerusalem, visitors needed a passport to move between the two, and cars with the blue Bethlehem number plate could not leave the city. All this will change next May, when Bethlehem will come under Palestinian rule. Tourism is top of the agenda.

Yasser Arafat heads Bethlehem 2000, an ambitious project which aims to transform the not-so-little town of Bethlehem. Its skyline – largely unchanged for centuries, with its towers and belfries, domes and spires, red-tiled monasteries and convents above steep, higgledy-piggledy streets – is about to get a facelift.

Markets will be torn down and rebuilt. Street elevations will be restored, and

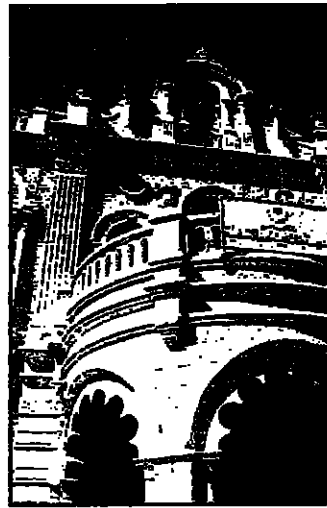
Nativity Square is being pedestrianised and will acquire a new bus station.

And Bethlehem is to get a five star hotel. The Jasser Palace, with 250 bedrooms and king-sized suites, will open at the end of next year. Jordanian investors are bankrolling the \$25m project.

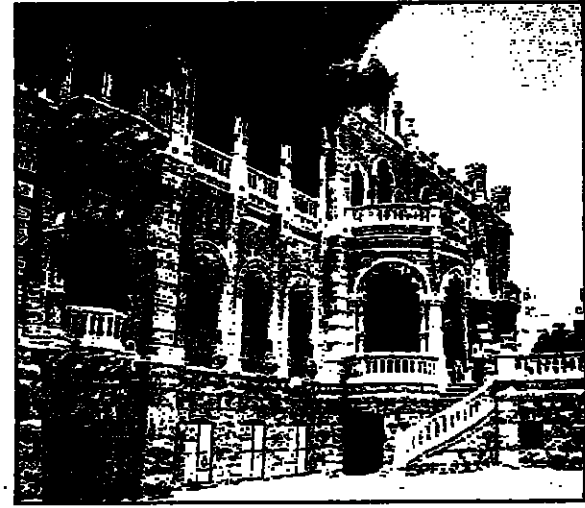
The Jasser Palace is being carefully crafted around an extraordinary family home, built in 1914 when Bethlehem was a quiet, mainly Arab-Christian, town within the Ottoman empire. A sugary cubed and cupolaed mini-Versailles, the Jasser Palace was built in pink and white Jerusalem stone, by a French architect, for a Christian trader. Sulaiman Jasser's name is still a flourish on the ornate gates.

Jasser was the Mayor of Bethlehem in the 1920s, before losing everything in the stockmarket crash of 1929, but his name is still synonymous with handouts he gave, to the poor and needy, and the fountain from which locals drew water. A phrase that apparently still has street-cred in Bethlehem is: "Where is the next meal coming from? At the Jasser." This optimistic expression has been written into the brief for the team of international consultants, to remind them to go back to the Jasser Palace roots in reinventing the family house as a hotel, and to overlook its more troubled recent history.

It has been an HQ for Hizbollah before the PLO occupied it, a hospital and a school. Papering over its history has been avoided by the hotel design consultants, Hirsch Bedner Associates. Hirsch Bedner are the hotel *haute couturiers* who pioneered that luxurious, glam-chic LA look of the Beverly Hills Hotel in California, with stretch-limo sofas and capacious club chairs, huge potted palms and great forests



Above: the imposing entrance on the road to Jerusalem, centre: the courtyard links old and new, right: the façade



of uplighters, pilasters and fluted columns, more marble than the Taj Mahal and gilding to dazzle.

"I knew we had to tell a story in Bethlehem if we weren't just to be another five-star hotel. This one had to be different, to have a larger sense of its own importance," Alex Kravetz of HBA says. Rather than give the hotel a bland and international make-over, the 34-year-old London-based Russian, who trained as a set designer with the Royal Shakespeare Company, took the down-at-heel palace and glorified it.

"Just like every job we do, we have to reflect the location," Alex says. The feel of the family home is evoked with fragrant cedar wood-scented cupboards, Lebanese type chairs with inlaid mother-of-pearl marquetry, carved screens that cast patterns

on the floor, stained-glass windows, brass Persian candelabras and mosaic-topped tables. Unlined colourful banners at the window, rather than formal drapes, and big carved rosewood chests grace the vaulted rooms.

Alex Kravetz describes the house style as "eclectic, transitional, classical and contemporary". Now that the phrase "very Arab" has become synonymous in the West with OTT opulence, this skilful interpretation of the past, matching the contemporary needs of a modern hotel, has been sensitively done. Some of the flourishes are positively Biblical – like the wall in the cellar restaurant, made out of stacked local terracotta pots, unchanged since the time when Christ turned water into wine.

This exercise in understanding Palestinian style, and making it internationally

chic, depends on buying in old family antiques for a touch of authenticity, using photographic archives to restore features such as deep-set niches, and commissioning local stone masons, carvers in lace-wood and birds-eye maple, weavers and potters. Using local sources brings down costs and creates work. It also maintains the atmosphere of a family home.

From a distance, the Jasser Palace resembles a set from *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. Up close, it is strong, unpretentious and well-proportioned. Its imposing entrance has strangely twisting stairs in *café au lait* stone.

Inlaid in the floor at the threshold is the Nativity Star, carved in hard pink stone, a favourite motif in Bethlehem. On either side of the entrance are salons, one furnished by the Jassers in "Louis-the-

something" for a French look, and the other in Arabic style, a distinction that the hotel will maintain.

The house, which is really only a tiny part of the gigantic hotel project, has been restored as the main entrance lobby with reception areas, a basement restaurant and a top-floor restaurant.

Simeon Halstead, the British architect based with Arcadia in Spain, seamlessly uses the same Jerusalem stone, arched and vaulted, for the new guest bedroom bays in garden wings. Olive trees in the courtyard, which have been there since the Nativity, will be flanked by palms winched in by California-based landscapers, Site Concepts.

And not even the legendary Star of Wonder in Bethlehem can out-sparkle the lighting scheme for this courtyard and the outdoor pool by Sally Storey of Lighting Design International in London. Indoors, she balances Persian candelabras with halogen and fibre-optics, hidden in thick windowsills and vaulted ceilings. Outdoors, she has created pools of light in pergolas all along the new construction.

"A lot of the hotel work was driven by political constraints," Kravetz explains. "Every item that we don't get from Palestine has to be imported through Israel, which has encouraged me to source locally for accessories."

Stencilled on the Jasser Palace plans, which the designers first drew up last July, is the old Hebrew name for Bethlehem, "Beit Lehem", Hebrew for "House of Bread". In Arabic it is "Bayt Lahim", meaning "House of Meat".

Not to be outdone on the Millennium tourist drive to the Holy Land, the Israelis are busy marketing Nazareth 2000.

A craftsman returns to his manor

The man who took art (and football) into Whitechapel is back, in a new exhibition. By Rosemary Hill

WHITECHAPEL in the 1880s was a place of horror. The Jack the Ripper murders were only the most terrible manifestations of depravity in a part of London whose violence and poverty haunted the middle classes like a recurring nightmare. Fear of unrest, and the promptings of conscience, sent young men from the universities into the East End to try to improve matters. One of them was a 25-year-old architect, Charles Robert Ashbee. In the summer of 1888, in the midst of the streets where the Ripper murders took place later that year, he set up his Guild of Handicraft.

Ashbee was a socialist and an idealist, but not a naïve one. He had been living in Whitechapel for two years, at Tynbee Hall, the first of the university settlements. He had also been impressed by William Morris's remark that if the Revolution actually came, then all the socialists would be hung the next day – for they were promising people more than they could give them.

Ashbee's idea was to give the members of his guild something tangible – work, education and entertainment. There was an art school attached to the guild – where the young Roger Fry taught – and there was even a football team.

At first there were just four craftsmen. At its peak, the Guild had 40 – most of them local men – who learned to make furniture, metalwork, jewellery, wrought-iron and printed books. Ashbee's designs were poised between the refined tail-end of the Gothic Revival and the

first stirrings of art nouveau.

Today it is the metalwork that is best-known and most collected – delicate mustard pots on arching legs, like insects by Aubrey Beardsley; bowls with swooping handles and surfaces lit with points of colour in enamel and semi-precious stones. The furniture, too, though scarcer, was of international importance. At the eighth Viennese Secessionist exhibition in 1900, the centrepiece was a cabinet made by the guild.

Vienna was a long way from Whitechapel. So, for that matter was the West End of London, where the guild established a shop. Yet it is from there, from the point of view of the patrons and collectors and of Ashbee himself, that the story of the Guild of Handicraft has usually been told.

Of the craftsmen, the effect of Ashbee's intervention in their lives and on the life of Whitechapel and nearby Mile End, where the guild moved in 1891, much less has been said. Now the Geffrye Museum in Shoreditch is bringing Ashbee back to the East End, in the first London exhibition devoted to the work of the Guild.

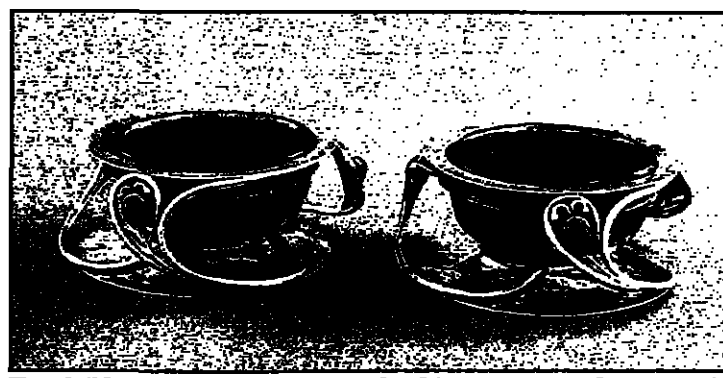
The show has been organised by Alan Crawford, Ashbee's biographer, who welcomes the chance to look at his subject from a new angle. The Guild, he concludes, gained as much from the East End as it gave. Indeed when it moved, in 1903, to Gloucestershire it lost direction and closed six years later. The city was the ideal place to nurture the Arts and Crafts Movement's mix of Radicalism, re-

action and practical socialism.

Ashbee, like Morris, was the son of a successful entrepreneur and a child of the London suburbs. He was a ruralist for whom the country represented an ideal, but the world he understood was the city. The crafts he wanted to revive were the luxury trades in which London had always excelled and which had, in varying degrees, survived the Industrial Revolution. When Ashbee set up shop, there were still dozens of small furniture manufacturers trading in Whitechapel.

It was on to those existing roots that Ashbee grafted his own ideas of craft practice and socialism. Opposed to the division of labour, he made sure the men and boys who came to the school were trained in all aspects of their craft. He brought the trades together, encouraging metalworkers to work with cabinet-makers in a way that was traditionally unknown. The Arts and Crafts philosophy of the workshop was of a place in which work should be satisfying, and where bridges could be built between social classes through practical co-operation. The football and amateur theatricals, in which Ashbee took enthusiastic part, were another way of integrating work into a whole, fulfilling way of life.

For 14 years the Guild succeeded, though its finances balanced on a knife-edge. Public concern about East London, and the presence of the university missions, created a climate in which such a hybrid could flourish. Art exhibitions were being



Frank Lloyd Wright's portrait of Ashbee (1900) and, above, the insect-like mustard pots

organised nearby in what would become the Whitechapel Gallery. Potential customers who recoiled from the fashion for "slumming" were nevertheless curious about the East End, and would come to see the workshops and buy from them. It was, as Crawford says, between those two currents of thought, the Arts and Crafts Movement and social philanthropy, that the Guild found its "momentum and reality". In the Cotswolds, where the education of working men was regarded with hostility, it flourished.

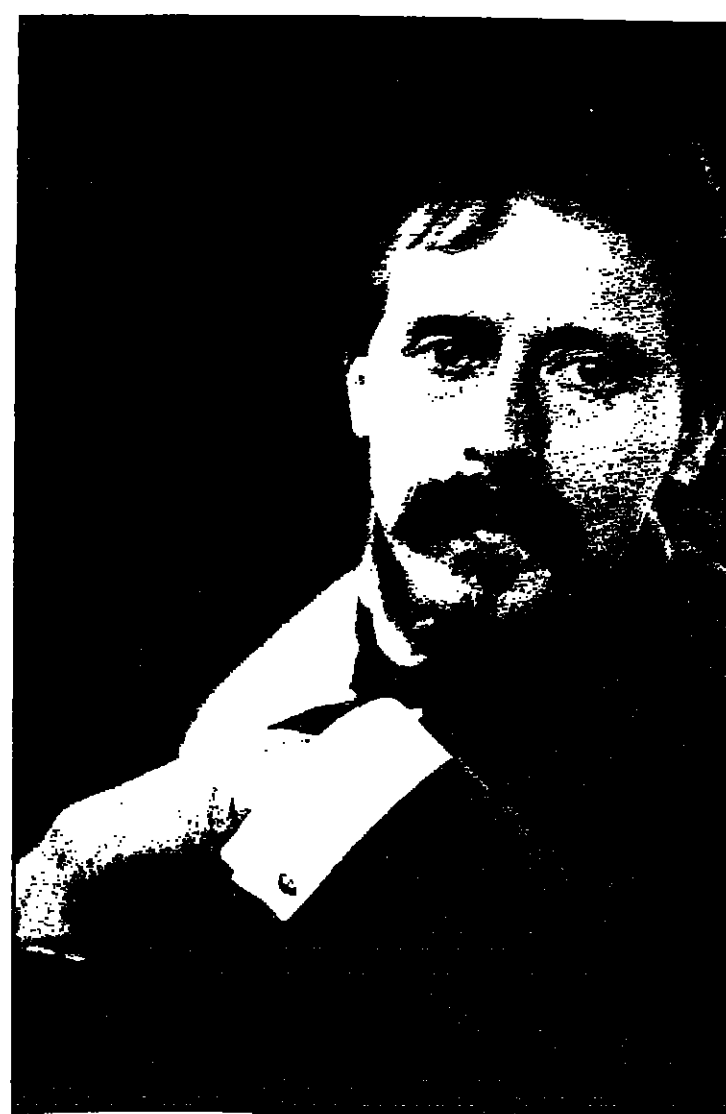
The craftsmen, too, were out of place. Ashbee talked of taking them "home", but they were Londoners. Their lives are scantily documented, but Crawford's researches show that, for most, the experience of the Guild was critical – for better and, occasionally, worse. At least two went on to teach their crafts in jobs to which, without the Guild, they could

not have aspired. Others could not find their way alone when it failed.

The Guild's departure from London did not, however, mark the end of its influence there. Ashbee had set up a watch committee to save buildings under threat, a project that became the continuing *Survey of London*. When, in 1912, a new use was needed for the 18th-century Geffrye Almshouses, it was Arts and Crafts petitioners who won the argument for turning it into a museum of English furniture and interiors.

Now, newly extended and with admission still free, the Geffrye is the ideal place to celebrate the ideals of Ashbee's years in the East End.

'C.R. Ashbee in East London' is at the Geffrye Museum, Kingsland Road, London E2 (0171-739 9893) until 21 March 1999, Tues-Sat, 10-5; Sunday, 2-5. Admission free



Don't cry for me Annabella

Most stars chase eternal youth. Not this one. She's hell-bent on ageing as painfully as possible. By Stephen Applebaum

Death becomes Annabella Scierra. In Abel Ferrara's creepy oddity, *The Addiction*, she made vampirism look chic and sexy as she sucked the life out of Lili Taylor, her face transformed into a death's-head by the film's chiaroscuro lighting. She also thrived on the deathly atmosphere of Ferrara's *The Funeral*, where her drawn features appeared etched with regret. The souls of Scierra's women, you feel, are in a permanent state of partial eclipse: even their happiest moments tinged with melancholy. Now this lingering sadness has found full lachrymal expression in *What Dreams May Come*, a visually arresting tale of love beyond the grave, from the visionary New Zealand film-maker Vincent Ward.

In this painterly epic, Scierra so immerses herself in the character of Annie, an artist who is first plunged into depression by the deaths of her children, and then driven to suicide - an act which literally lands her in Hell - by the loss of her husband (Robin Williams), that you're convinced she's reliving real trauma.

Scierra will admit that she had doubts about taking the part. "I felt that there would be too much crying involved, and that it would be very tough to do that and remain sane at the end of the day. Ultimately, I was afraid of how far I would go with this character, because I knew I wouldn't be faking it."

Such a performance is the product of what could be described as a Faustian pact which the actress has made with her emotions. Living the roles "makes you older faster", she says. "When I came back from doing *What Dreams May Come*, I was so tired. I was walking down the street with a friend one day, and I said, 'I feel like I got older on this movie.' And she said, 'You look like you did.' I didn't like hearing that but, physically, I think it does take a toll; especially if you're the kind of person who is emotional and cries a lot."

She did what she could to cushion the blows. "I took an apartment in San Francisco, where we shot the film, and filled it with a lot of extra linen for friends and family, so that at the end of the day I would have a dinner to cook, or a niece or a nephew to hang out with, and have some sort of normal life." (Scierra is not "attached" at the moment.)

This desire for normality is reflected in the diminutive actress's plain, no-nonsense personality. When asked about the spiritual themes underpinning *What Dreams May Come*, and the notion of an afterlife, she refuses to play the PR game and launch into some airy-fairy New Age discourse.



Annabella Scierra: 'I was afraid of how far I would go with this character, because I knew I wouldn't be faking it'

Neville Elders

"I saw the film as a dream or a Greek myth. To me it was about the opportunities that we have to create a wonderful life or a hell for ourselves." People tend to assume Scierra is a crucifix-clutching Catholic. Not at all. "I couldn't connect with the afterlife thing because I don't have any strong religious beliefs. I think when you die there's just a lot of dirt. Some journalists have gotten really angry with me for saying that, but that's how I feel. If anything, this movie has made me more concerned with immediate things, like the people in my life and the love that I have. Honest to God, I could be a pretty cynical person, but about stuff like that I feel grateful everyday."

Indeed, she gets so carried away by the theme of love that she suddenly finds herself on the brink of tears. She has always been this way, she says. Even as a child, when she watched the emotionally charged films of Irene Papas and Gena Rowlands at festivals with her brother, she "would feel get excited - feel all this stuff bubbling up inside."

Is such trembly sensitivity the result of an insecure childhood? Scierra laughs. "I did this movie, *The Cure*," she recalls, "and after doing 18 takes of my son dying, the director said, 'What did they do to you as a child?' I was painfully shy, but I've had a really very loving, very nurturing family, a happy childhood."

In fact, Scierra's closeness to her family is one reason she still resides in New York. She moved there from Connecticut when she was 11, with her veterinarian father and fashion stylist mother, and has no intention of moving permanently to the West Coast.

If she had decamped to Los Angeles in 1991, following her acclaimed performance opposite Wesley Snipes in Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever*, then she might not have had to wait until she was 34 to star in her first \$85m blockbuster. Instead, Scierra remains an actress "on the verge" of a breakthrough - 10 years after her debut in Nancy Savoca's *True Love* and despite glowing critical notices for her per-

formances in films such as *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle*, *Internal Affairs*, *Cadillac Man* (also with Robin Williams), and *Cop Land*.

"I think if I would get on a fucking airplane and go out to L.A. and get an apartment and stay there, that might help the 'breakthrough' situation," she concedes. "(Casting directors) used to come there more often, and you didn't really have to be in L.A. But now it seems like there are less and less roles. When they make these big movies, they hire one big name and, because they just want to pay one big salary, the rest are like whoever'll work for the cheapest amount. It has nothing to do with the quality of acting."

She also believes Hollywood often

overlooks her because they cannot see past her Italian background. Her agent told her recently that she had not been considered for a role in a family drama because of her ethnicity. Yet the actresses cast as the character's siblings were exactly her colouring, if not darker. "Sometimes I think that if I was going to do it all over I would change my name," she says ruefully.

Inevitably several actresses were given a shot at *What Dreams May Come* before it was offered to Scierra, but the limited sum offered by the film's producers received a cool response. Meryl Streep and Michelle Pfeiffer are both rumoured to have turned the part down, after which the offer went to Annette Bening.

When discussions with her collapsed, Scierra stepped in.

Whether or not *What Dreams May Come* elevates Annabella Scierra on to Hollywood's A-list, she has enough acting work to see her through to the end of the millennium. And no, she does not want to spend New Year's Eve, 1999, somewhere spiritual. Such as the pyramids, as one journalist suggested to her recently.

"Who the fuck wants to get on a plane and go there? No. I imagine that I will be with my family, where I am every year on New Year's Eve, eating and drinking wine."

'What Dreams May Come' is released 26 December

Out of sight but still in the mind's eye

WHEN MOST people think of the photographer John Dugdale's images they see lean, naked men with good muscle definition. Standing men, reclining men and men just lounging around enjoying a life of leisure. Gay icons each and every one. But there

another side to Dugdale's work: the still-lives, portraits and landscapes which are now being shown at London's Hamiltons Gallery. For someone who has lost 75 per cent of his sight, Dugdale has a very clear vision of the world. He may not be able to actually see what's in front of him but the clarity and strength of his mind's eye more than make up for that. "I have a full, clear visual picture of everything I photograph," he says. "Eyesight and

vision are completely different - vision starts inside my head." All of Dugdale's photographs have a timeless quality and are immersed in a multi-toned cobalt blue, highlighted with specks of white reflective light.

The still-lives of piled-high fruit, candlesticks and crockery recall the old masters, while the ordered interiors conjure up the calm of the Dutch masters' domestic scenes. The muted compositions lead you into thinking of oils rather than print, and achieve an arresting beauty.

Wells Cathedral, the South Downs and Brussels sprouts all get the unique Dugdale treatment. The Venice skyline is also captured: a vulnerable band of buildings floating on the surface of a mass of intense

VISUAL ARTS

JOHN DUGDALE
HAMILTONS, LONDON/
JULIAN HARTNOLL
LONDON

blue water, under a huge, watery sky. Dugdale, 38, was diagnosed with Aids in 1985, and his loss of sight is a result of that. Death hangs in the air in much of his work, although the references are not visually overt. *Paris Porcelain Teapot* (1997) is a limited-edition print of which all proceeds will go to the Elton John Aids Foundation.

It was in 1993, after years of working as a professional photog-

rapher, that Dugdale suffered a stroke that destroyed most of his sight. What was left was little more than a hazy blur on the lower periphery of his left eye. This was the moment when many people would simply have given up but Dugdale merely switched to a different, more manageable technique and brought in assistants to see on his behalf.

He uses a large antique Kodak camera, the simple developing process cyanotype and powerful magnifying glasses. His assistants focus the camera and, by closely following his detailed instructions and describing for him the fall of light, put together his compositions.

Within walking distance of Hamiltons, there is a second exhibition fea-

turing work by Dugdale. The selection on show at Julian Hartnoll's Gallery, as part of "Men III", concentrate on the male nude. Alongside his photographs hang works by Derek Jarman, Robert Mapplethorpe and Anderson & Low.

Dugdale features in many of his own works, perhaps most memorably in Elton John's bath, where he appears languid, peaceful and focused on the simple pleasure of life.

KATE MIKHAIL
John Dugdale, Hamiltons, 13 Carlos Place, London W1 (0171-499 9493). 'Men III', Julian Hartnoll's Gallery, 14 Mason's Yard, off Duke Street, London SW1 (0171-839 3842). Both exhibitions run to 23 Dec



Detail from John Dugdale's 'Table Top with English Brass'

Too sweet to be wholesome

DEREK DEANE'S production of the English National Ballet's *Nutcracker* isn't quite good clean fun if you are an adult and paying attention. Drosselmeyer is Clara's godfather and the implicit tone of his attentions towards her are clearly inappropriate. The threat of paedophilia provides a subconscious logic to the sinister figure he cuts in her dreams, but it is odd for a ballet that is a traditional children's treat.

Childish eyes presumably don't take this in. Perhaps they won't be too disturbed, either, by Clara's dysfunctional family, her philandering father inviting his mistress to their Christmas party. But that, too, gives psychological sense to Clara's escape into dreamland; and besides, it is part of Deane's wittily contemporary staging, where the women wear chic cocktail dresses and one guest

DANCE

THE NUTCRACKER
ENGLISH NATIONAL
BALLET
LONDON COLISEUM

conducts a domestic squabble on her mobile phone. The audience laughed at the Robot-cop, Barbie Doll and Michael Jackson lookalikes which arrived as Drosselmeyer's dolls.

Derek Deane, returning to performance after almost a decade, comes close to dominating the whole show as Drosselmeyer, vividly painting the character's ambiguous fascination. His mime is wonderfully incisive as he summons the party children and populates the dream; but he also shows he has lost none of his smooth partnering skill in a long, strenuous *pas de deux* with Clara.

Alice Crawford as Clara, and Xian Zhang as her naughty brother, Fritz, are adult dancers who seem no older than the real children on stage. Crawford, whose twiglet arms could probably snap, has toned down her simps and caricatured affectations, making her a charming Clara.

The best dancing, though, comes from Daria Klimontova as the Snow Queen, so icily precise, her series of profile arabesques seem etched on air that has suddenly solidified. Around her, dancing Icicles and Snowflakes build a flurry of crisscrossing lines as angelic children's voices sing with orchestra under Patrick Flynn's textured direction.

The rest of Deane's choreography is less interesting, especially in the Kingdom of Sweets. The set numbers seem surprisingly predictable,

although the giant moving bags of candies are a witty invention. Sue Blane's designs - so elegant in the earlier scenes - are part of the problem here. It was a fun idea to take English confectionery as her inspiration; but *Liquorice Allsorts* are more colourful than beautiful.

Perhaps it would have had more sparkle for me with a different couple in the focal *pas de deux* for the *Nutcracker* Prince and the Sugar Plum Fairy. Thomas Edur takes great care to move with clean geometry, but he is not an exciting virtuoso. Agnes Oaks lacks stretch and her phrasing suffers from a monotonous sameness. I can only conclude that the popular appeal of this partnership rests on their blond, catwalk glamour.

NADINE MEISNER
To 9 Jan: 0171-632 8300

Titter ye not. This is serious

THE BOSNIAN actor Velibor Topic is an extraordinary sight. Tall and shaven-headed, he combines some of the beauty and brooding presence of the young Brando with an altogether more hulking, extraterrestrial quality. One would think twice about ever giving this man a bad review. In fact, the chance to gawp at him for extended periods of time is one of the few perks of sitting through *The Legendary Golem*, a new musical by Sylvia Freedman and Cathy Shostak. Topic excels as the title character, a Frankenstein-like figure fashioned from the elements by a chief rabbi to defend the Jewish ghetto from race hatred in 16th-century Prague.

You might think from such a summary that the show would be a sort of *My Fair Lady* meets *Fiddler on the Roof*, the hubristic, presumptuous cre-

MUSICAL

THE LEGENDARY
GOLEM
NEW END THEATRE
LONDON

ator and his coerced, unhappy creation, transferred to a context where the desperate fight for cultural survival gives the whole business an ambiguous justification. This is clearly the musical that Freedman and Shostak have set out to write. The trouble is that they have hedged their bets so much on sugary love interest (the number "Love Turns the World" should be retitled "Love Turns the Storm") and formulaic father/son conflict, that the key issues don't loom large enough.

Or coherently. When the Golem, crazed with frustration at being an outsider-slave, runs amok and kills one of the Chris-

tian guards who are terrorising the ghetto, David Burt's dignified, dark-voiced rabbi kneels and sings a song about how he now recognises himself and his own capacity for violence in the Golem. Given his previous pacifism, this makes as much sense as giving Professor Higgins a ditty about how Eliza's example has made him realise that, deep down, he's always had a hankering to be a lady.

That's not the only puzzle. I failed to work out why, in a Prague where the Jews are constantly harassed about their identification papers and there's a virulent drive for racial purity, an eye-catching alien like the Golem can go around with apparent impunity.

The production boasts a large, talented cast which director Brennan Street steers around the tight, two-tier base with some fluency and visual

flair. But the songs, with their banal rhyme schemes and unearthing music, don't rise to the occasion. A number about the impulse towards ethnic cleansing should not, by rights, make one titter, but it's hard not to when you hear that "Living is delightful if only the frightful/are kept in their places" (or words to that effect), while a lot of monks chant Latin.

The 1580 plot is framed by a story also set in Prague at the start of the 1989 Velvet Revolution. Parallels between these two examples of oppression transcended are under-explored in favour of uplift and the muzzy message that "Legends lead us from despair/Golems can be shaped from fire and air". Which may be true, but as expressed here, just sounds a bit of a miss.

PAUL TAYLOR
To 17 Jan: 0171-794 0022

MUSIC

Awop bop aloo bop and so on

The thing about pop music is it's everywhere. It's part of the day to day fabric of the world we live in, whether we like it or not. Which spells trouble for the high-minded. In the penultimate piece in our series, Andy Gill considers what it means to be a rock critic

Pop is the most immediate of media. Not in the sense of immediate gratification offered by television, but in the immediacy of its response to change. Compared to the years of production meetings, market research and logistical analysis that go into the average TV programme before the first lens-cap gets removed, pop's reaction-time is virtually instant, a fireless cultural barometer shifting to the subtlest of currents.

Yet behind pop's malleable, accommodating surface lurks that mesmerising, obsessional quality Noel Coward recognised in his observation about the potency of cheap music. A beloved tune may become patinated with a lifetime of memories and associations, but in your imagination it never ages, never sounds less than Cellophane-fresh. It's the opposite of what happens in most other media, where the initial attraction is impossible to relive. And though television deals in much the same kind of instant fix as pop, being a visual medium it recedes more swiftly into the past: a documentary about punk invariably looks more dated than punk music sounds.

It'll sound that way for ever, too: no other art form is as skillfully designed for repetition as pop, with the possible exception of computer games. And even the allure of Lara Croft's pounding thighs diminishes with time, while "God Only Knows" goes on for ever. So: immediate response, instant appeal, unlimited repetition, deepening attachment – such are the considerations rock critics have to grapple with when stalking the many-headed beast of pop. Not that you need to hunt far to find it: no other art form is quite as democratically available, or as omnipresent.

Pop was the medium the baby-boom generation chose to carry it into adulthood. For millions of people, it's simply second nature, the language in which their lives have been defined. Accordingly, rock critics work with the knowledge that they will be read and understood by a broad swath of casual readers, as well as the charmed circle of professional insiders. Read, understood, and judged, too: a provincial reader may only be able to fantasise about seeing that new ENO presentation, and will probably have forgotten the review by the time s/he eventually gets to attend the opera; but that same reader could, within the hour, be grumbling about how a



A tale of two record collections: the great Greil Marcus (left) and the gonzo Tom Wolfe, two major figures in the history of music journalism



reviewer has misled them into dashing out and buying that Manic Street Preachers album from the petrol station on the corner.

Rock criticism as we know it began in the mid-Studies with the rise of Bob Dylan, when the tools of explication first became necessary. Before that, most pop was a matter of moaning and juning, with songs knocked together from a small portfolio of romantic clichés; but when Dylan ported the baggage of poetry and protest into pop, there was a need for commentary to reflect the puzzling new depth the form had taken on. The underground press rushed in to fill the vacuum, particularly in America, where magazines like *Crawdaddy* and *Rolling Stone* gave writers such as Greil Marcus and Lester Bangs the room to investigate their subject more deeply and, in Bangs's case, more bizarrely. Marcus's ground-breaking Seventies collection of essays, *Mystery Train*, remains a high-water mark of pop criticism, notable for the way its essays on The Band, Sty

Stone and Elvis Presley revealed the form's allegorical lucidity.

The entire field of rock criticism, though, has since been choked by the inordinate influence of Hunter S Thompson and Tom Wolfe – both good writers, but both more journalist than critic (the reader who let Thompson influence his choice of music would find himself listening to the cocktail cowboy Jimmy Buffet; heaven alone knows what horrors comprise Wolfe's record collection). Thompson's "gonzo" style has been responsible for countless egotistical incursions into their own features by rock journalists desperate to present themselves as at the very centre of whatever scene is happening. Wolfe's New Journalism approach, meanwhile, remains a useful option for writers who need to make dull musicians – and yes, they are mostly dull – "sound" better in print through lurid, onomatopoeic descriptions of rock-star lifestyles. But however lurid the lifestyle, no amount of New Journalism can

take a bad song and make it better. And there are so many bad songs – and, worse, songs that are neither amazingly good nor amusingly bad, but simply indifferent. Mediocrity is, in a sense, the condition to which all pop aspires; this commercial art form tries to insinuate its way into the affections of as many punters as possible. After all, the average is always more assured of widespread popularity than the exceptional, which can fail just as exceptionally as it succeeds.



THE CRITICAL CONDITION

So, while in other media the avant garde is supported and encouraged through the luxury of patronage and subsidy, in pop it's left to fend for itself alongside Robbie Williams and The Spice Girls, a sort of self-generating, self-funding R&D department. That it thrives quite as much as it does is almost entirely due to the efforts of rock critics who lavish love and attention on neglected musical species until, like those strange desert plants that bloom only once every quarter-century, they eventually burst into wider recognition.

Yet those same rock journalists find themselves, almost as a matter of course, loathed by the music industry, and particularly its pampered stars, for occasionally daring to voice an opinion at odds with the company line. It's indicative of the selfish, ungrateful side of the business that a critic's poorly remunerated devotion to others' work should be repaid with such contempt by those who are made rich and famous through that devotion. How many

times have you heard a pop star whine about the media, in all available media?

Over the last couple of decades, as its techniques of persuasion – copy approval, access to stars, etc – have grown more powerful, the industry has come to view the rock critic as little more than a glorified cheerleader. Sadly, many critics seem to acquiesce in this assessment, which has led to the creeping debasement of rock journalism as a critical mode. Stunted by an infantile preoccupation with sexual matters, showbiz discourse is routinely conducted in a lather of hyperbole – with everything being the best ever, the greatest, the sexiest, the most this or that – yet with a blithe disregard of the basic background knowledge which other critical disciplines assume as a prerequisite.

By its very nature, the weekly pop press is heavily dependent on the rapid turnover of stars and scenes. One of the basic truths of music-paper publishing is that sales soar when there is a definable "scene" –

punk, new romantics, baggy, Britpop, whatever – for readers to latch on to. Accordingly, much of the effort of writers on the weeklies is expended in trying to develop such a scene. Unfortunately, less and less time is spent on the basic matter of facts: only the other week, the once-authoritative *NME* carried a reference to "The Moody Blues' vestal virgin turning cartwheels across the floor", presumably written by someone whose music history handbook didn't stretch as far as Procol Harum.

The alternative to the weeklies is the monthly music press that developed as the original baby-boomer wave rolled its relentless way through the Eighties and Nineties. Critics writing for magazines such as *Mojo* and *Uncut* pride themselves on their attention to historical detail – they wouldn't just know about Procol Harum's big hit, they'd give you the running-order of every album and the set-list from their last gig, too. Whether you wanted it or not, derided as "dad's mags" by the weeklies, they're sometimes slow to manoeuvre, but still provide a more reliable account than most.

Their archival, fact-based approach is certainly preferable to academic pop criticism, a rapid form involving either long, sterile essays on such riveting subjects as pop and politics, women "in" pop and rock against racism, or the drab enumeration of strands of subcultural phenomena in which the poor beast pop (or its poor offspring, youth culture) is strapped to the dissection table and agonisingly deprived of any life it may once have embodied. For such critics, pop is just another subject, albeit more phenomenal than most. Ask them what they feel about the music, whether they love it madly, and they wouldn't know what you're talking about.

This is, perhaps, the crux of the matter. People become rock critics for all manner of reasons – as a stepping-stone to other forms of journalism or media work; because they wanted to meet pop stars; because they couldn't make it as a pop star themselves – but the best are those for whom the interest goes beyond dedication, into the realm of deep emotional attachment. Because ultimately the worth of any rock criticism is always in proportion to the critic's love of music. Any music. All music. Except Phil Collins, course.

Edward Seckerson on classical music criticism, page 14

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Concerts

Wigmore Hall
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18 Dec 7.30pm
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19 Dec 7.30pm
KATHRYN STOTT piano. Rakhmaninov: Variations on a Theme of Corelli; Villa-Lobos: Bachianas brasileiras No. 4; Grieg: Piano Concerto; Liszt: Grand Sonata; Chopin: Nocturne; Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No. 2.

20 Dec 7.30pm
THE WIGMORE CHRISTMAS CONCERT. Directed by Steven Isserlis. Includes: Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 1; Liszt: Piano Concerto No. 1; Chopin: Piano Concerto No. 1; Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No. 2.

21 Dec 7.30pm
LYNN HARRILL solo. BECHTOLD piano. Includes: Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 1; Liszt: Piano Concerto No. 1; Chopin: Piano Concerto No. 1; Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No. 2.

22 Dec 7.30pm
PSALMOUS: THE PSALMS OF DAVID. Includes: Handel: Messiah; Vivaldi: The Four Seasons; Bach: Goldberg Variations.

23 Dec 7.30pm
LONDON WINDS. Includes: Handel: Messiah; Vivaldi: The Four Seasons; Bach: Goldberg Variations.

24 Dec 7.30pm
THE KING'S CONSORT. Includes: Handel: Messiah; Vivaldi: The Four Seasons; Bach: Goldberg Variations.

25 Dec 7.30pm
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30 Dec 7.30pm
THE KING'S CONSORT. Includes: Handel: Messiah; Vivaldi: The Four Seasons; Bach: Goldberg Variations.

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Christmas comes but once a year, for which we should be thankful. Not least because the festive season heralds a flood of sumptuously packaged, must-have box-sets. Doh! Andy Gill tackles the best in pop...

THE BIGGEST album release of the year, quite literally, has to be Sinatra: The Capitol Years (Capitol). Collecting together all of Frankie's 21 albums for the label - from 1954's ground-breaking Songs For Young Lovers (arguably the first-ever concept album) to 1962's Sinatra Sings... Of Love And Things - it captures the singer at his most definitive, riding the swell of his second wave of success that accompanied his Oscar for From Here To Eternity.

With the innovative string arrangements of Nelson Riddle and Billy May encouraging Sinatra to his finest interpretations, this is the sound of the American Dream in full expansion, bursting with post-war confidence, but not yet curdled into the arrogant swagger of rock'n'roll. Suave and slightly salty, there's a laconic confidence to his readings of even slightly dubious material, with Sinatra's reservations signalled by the occasional sly verbal equivalent of a raised eyebrow. Few other singers have taken such huge risks, and made it all seem so effortless.

By comparison, most of the other boxes on offer seem slightly small-minded. All The Young Dudes: The Anthology (Columbia), for instance, takes three CDs to cover the career of Mott The Hoople, yet still manages to get it not quite right. Sandwiching one disc of hits between two featuring out-takes and "rarities" of questionable value, it rather neglects the band's



Boxing clever: Frank Sinatra and, to a lesser extent, Mott The Hoople; below, John Coltrane

Dylan-esque origins, depicting them instead as just a proto-heavy-rock outfit who somehow made the timely leap to glam.

From the same era, The Vaudeville Years of Fleetwood Mac 1968 to 1970 (Reprise) offers two CDs of out-takes, live cuts and jams from the dog days of the first, great incarnation of the Mac: the period bounded by their first chart successes and the eventual departure of the guitar genius, Peter Green. They were,

by a country-blues mile, the finest progressive blues band of their era, and this set captures them at their most innovative, as they put together the landmark *Then Play On* album that included Green's extraordinary "Oh Well" and "Green Manalishi".

In their blend of blues and prog-rock, The Black Crowes are probably the closest Nineties equivalent to Fleetwood Mac. Great psychedelic swamp-blues-rockers, they were at their best

when most closely following the *Exile On Main Street* blueprint with 1992's *The Southern Harmony And Bible Companion*, and their poorest when straying into psychedelic excess. The five-CD box *Sho' Nuff* (American) simply brings together their four studio albums, each bolstered by the obligatory couple of bonus tracks, plus a live EP from 1995, in a box apparently designed to facilitate spillage.

The roots of the blues are



Motion 1965-1998 (Columbia), a three-CD set covering the career of Taj Mahal, who has almost single-handedly kept alive the notion of the country-blues as a living artform. Not just a bluesman, Taj has a broader range of reference than most of his peers, bringing into play such long-lost modes as the cakewalk, along with the musical styles of Hawaii, the Caribbean, and the wider African diaspora. Given his intelligence and his breadth, however, this set is slightly disappointing, neglecting as it does the rockier, more rhythmic end of his R&B.

The *Transatlantic Story* (Castle) is a four-CD retrospective of one of Britain's pre-eminent folk labels, though too much of it is wasted covering the label's early years, a mish-mash of opportunistic independence whose releases covered sex talk, comedy, poetry, satire, politics and the Portsmouth Sinfonia, who were all of the above. The set only gets going with the second CD, dedicated to the likes of Bert Jansch, John Renbourn and Ralph McTell.

Finally, XTC's *Transistor Blast* (Cooking Vinyl) collates together on four discs their in-concert and studio sessions recorded for the BBC through the late Seventies and Eighties. It's all high-quality work, presenting the Swindon combo as the clever-dick pop precursors of such as Mansun. "We didn't know what we were doing," explains Andy Partridge in the sleeve note, "but we did it loud."

...while Phil Johnson takes a deep breath before examining the latest offerings from the wonderful world of jazz

THIS BOX-SET business may be getting out of hand. The Blue Note Years comprises 14 CDs, contained in 7 digi-packs, all set in an LP-sized box. The set also includes a 48-page booklet of session photographs by the label's co-owner, Francis Wolff, along with some contemporary pictures by Jimmy Katz. For this 60th anniversary celebration - 1939-99, and still going - of the greatest jazz record label there has ever been, you pay a price closer to the cost of an annual car insurance "than to

normal impulse buys at Virgin or Tower. It's no wonder that it's a limited edition. The dedicated fans and collectors at whom the artefact is presumably aimed will already have most of the tracks featured on the discs, which are programmed according to both chronology and genre in seven volumes, such as "1935-1960: The Jazz Messenger" and "1958-1967: Organ and Soul".

Both the final volume, where tunes associated with the label's old artists are reinterpreted by the

current roster, and the previous one, which includes tracks by Earl Klugh, Ronnie Laws and Bobby McFerrin, are less than essential, and that's putting it kindly. Almost everything else, however, is reliably great. Some of the best shots come from the earliest sessions recorded by Blue Note's founder, Alfred Lion. The boogie-woogie of Albert Ammons and Meade Lux Lewis, Sidney Bechet's stunning version of "Summertime", and Edmond Hall's "Profoundly Blue", with its

melancholy-sounding celeste, are intensely musical performances that testify to Lion's eminently humanist approach to the recording of jazz by black Americans.

Compared to the Blue Note biggie, the 8 CD box, *The Classic Quartet: Complete Impulse Studio Recordings* by John Coltrane, is, at £80 or less, relatively cheap and cheerful. There is a wealth of previously unreleased material, and the chronological tracking of Coltrane's incredible journey from the con-



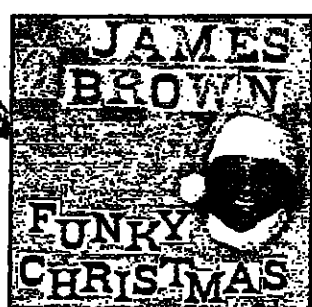
ventional, if beautifully rendered, standards of the *Ballads* album of 1962, through *A Love Supreme*, and on to the deep interior-space

of *Transition* and *Sunship* from 1965, makes for the most fascinating listening.

If there is a fault, then it is this: that box-sets in general are just so unwieldy and uncomfortable to use. To assert that the original albums have the status of definitive texts might be untenable, given that the selection of their contents was always rather contingent, but somehow they remain more satisfactory, and more real than the warts and all of the "complete" versions.

THIS YEAR'S CHRISTMAS ALBUMS

REVIEWED BY ANDY GILL



JAMES BROWN
Funky Christmas
Spectrum

FEW STARS know how to work the festive season the way James Brown does. *Funky Christmas* is the Godfather's fourth Christmas album, although it's compiled from the previous three. There's plenty to recommend it - the prompt riff and rap of "Santa Claus Go Straight To The Ghetto", the great second-line snare work on "Christmas Is Love", and all of "Let's Make Christmas Mean Something This Year, Parts 1 & 2". He also sticks closely to his namesake Charles's classic delivery of "Merry Christmas Baby", the greatest Christmas song of them all, a number so cool it concludes with the claim "I haven't had a toddy all morning/But I'm lit up like a Christmas tree". That's the spirit!



SHAWN COLVIN
Holiday Songs And Lullabies
Columbia

SPURRED BY her own impending motherhood, Shawn Colvin's seasonal offering is based on a Maurice Sendak-illustrated anthology of *Lullabies & Night Songs* she remembered from her childhood. The opening "In The Bleak Midwinter" is typical of the almost terminally relaxed manner employed, with soothing organ and strings providing a powerfully soporific backdrop to Colvin's delicate delivery. But the album's unrelenting twyness, while appropriate in principle, is in practice rather more Mabel Lucie Attwell than Maurice Sendak. Rather a letdown from the singer whose last album, the Grammy-winning *A Few Small Repairs*, perhaps encouraged unreasonable expectations.



CYNDI LAUPER
Merry Christmas...Have A Nice Life!
Epic

ON HER Christmas album, Cyndi Lauper accentuates the folksy, rural nature of her material, using instruments such as dulcimer and recorder to create a pleasing air of *rustique moderne*, with tambourine occasionally standing in for sleigh bells. There are hints of Ronnie Spector in her delivery of "Early Christmas Morning", but instead of the Spector Wall of Sound, she's backed by cajun accordion and child choir; likewise, her "Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree" is a frisky ska tune. It's a form which suits her well: Cyndi's dizzy, pantomime style allows her to indulge in shameless sing-along nonsense like "Minnie And Santa" with an alacrity denied to more "serious" singers.

Camp comes to heavy metal

HEAVY METAL has long been regarded as one of the less subtle musical genres - an essentially conservative style that is regularly revived to meet the needs of mutinous adolescents. But if Wednesday night's metal extravaganza is anything to go by, post-modernism has finally wound its way into head-banging circles, and not before time.

What saved both Monster Magnet and Rob Zombie from reaching the depths of poor taste was their ability to send themselves up. While most of Monster Magnet's songs stuck to a similar formula - a slow prelude consisting of simple guitar figures and doom-laden drums erupting into thrusting riffs - it was the singer Dave Wyndorf's knowingness that prevented it from becoming

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ROB ZOMBIE
LONDON ASTORIA

ing a tedious trawl through the heavy-metal handbook.

Wyndorf is a carefully crafted rock god complete with tight stripes, a glossy mane and *Gladiator*-style paws glistening beneath a naff leather waistcoat. He rolled around on the floor, surfed the edge of the stage and strode up and down hugging himself, as if to anticipate after-show congratulations. He even pulled the old simulated orgasm trick with a bottle of beer, and cackled triumphantly as if revelling in his own absurdity.

The guitars are pared down

and the pace is slowed for a more serious track, "Space Lord", to reveal the group's sensitive side, but Wyndorf cannot resist thrusting his hips about like a Scandinavian porn star. As cock-rockers Monster Magnet cannot be faulted. However, all their attempts at sobriety are ridiculous.

Rob Zombie was in possession of a similar knowingness but had mercifully few illusions about his sex appeal. With his Mad-Max-meets-Fagin appearance, the former frontman of industrial metal act White Zombie cuts a simultaneously impressive and repulsive figure. Under his green-tinted dreadlocks and ZZ Top beard you can just make out eyes that radiate mischief. Their sound is fashioned by speed-metal guitars, growing death-metal

vocals, with a scattering of fractured horror flick samples, that hold an energising appeal but soon start to grate. You can also gauge the band's satire through their B-movie surroundings. A giant robot's head glowers from the back of the stage through green eyes, while the drum kit seems precariously balanced upon a faux-medieval treasure chest.

Zombie's chums on guitar and bass prowled around the stage and sneer at the audience like the chorus line from *Cats*, while Zombie himself runs up and down like a man possessed. Despite the testosterone bouncing from the Astoria's walls, it all seems gloriously camp. If their metal careers don't stay the course, there's always pantos.

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MEGASTORES

1465-1917 The Whole Damn Dynasty

Trust me: I wrote the review

Critics have come in for a lot of criticism. But don't paint them as bogeymen, says Edward Seckerson, concluding our series

Critic. Small word, big responsibility, mean reputation. Critics get a bad press. Critics are vindictive, critics are destructive, critics are the enemy, critics are to be feared; critics are users, never facilitators, parasites prospering at the creative artist's expense. Critics are frustrated performers. Those who cannot do, criticise.

So far I'm having trouble recognising myself.

Maybe the fault lies with the definition. A critic may be "a professional judge of art, music, literature etc" or - and could this be the source of the misconception - "a person who often finds fault and criticises". We all criticise. We all have opinions; we all express them. In my experience, the amateur critic - collectively Joe Public at large - is far less forgiving and far more effusive than the accredited professional. It's "awful", "terrible", "ghastly", "wonderful", "absolutely fabulous", darling, and there's an end of it. Ours not to reason why. We live in impatient times, an age of shorthand and sound-bites and sweeping generalisations. Never mind the quality or the width, and to hell with the detail; cut to the chase. The rush to judgement is inevitable. But good criticism effectively begins where judgement ends, with the ways, hows and wherefores. And "quality control" is not even the half of it.

So this critic's credo begins like this: you can take or leave his opinion, but not his prose. Now admittedly this leaves him wide open to accusations of self-indulgence. Isn't it a fact that the critics of smart-assed critics invariably accuse them of using the event - be it a concert, opera, or recording, in my case - as a vehicle for their own self-gratification? Well, yes, it's a delicate balance. The clever prose that would seem to draw attention to itself at the expense of the event may be enjoyed rather more than it should be encouraged, but then again I'll take a good read over a conscientious evaluation any day. Criticism at its best is about sharing the experience. In a sense it's part of the experience, a kind of post-performance art. It's what happens after the applause has died. Because it's at this point that the critic effectively becomes both performer and reporter. If you were there, you'll be wanting to pit your wits against his or her better judgement; you'll be seeking to re-live the experience as you remembered it. A good review will help you to do that. If you weren't there, you'll be wanting to know whether you should have been. And even if the event in question is a one-off (and many of my reviewing shouts are) consider the extent to which a creative piece of writing can serve as a kind of surrogate for the real thing. So let's hear



no more of this nonsense about the pointlessness of writing about something once it's over and done with. Long before I could afford to attend concerts or opera or even buy recordings, I grew familiar with works and performers I had not yet experienced through the well-chosen words of my predecessors.

Writing about music is a strange, even unnatural, business. Finding words to express sounds, finding images to express feelings expressed through melody, harmony, texture, may seem self-defeating: why verbalise that which by its very nature is a sensory experience? Because good musical commentary and analysis is enlightening. And that's something else that critics are not supposed to do. Enlighten. Notice

that I'm talking here about music before I talk about performance. To me a critic has as great a responsibility to the music, to the composers, as does the artist. How else are you to ascertain their success, or otherwise? It's never just about the notes, but the reasons for them. Why are they there, what do they say and mean? The critic should be asking the same questions as the performer, and coming up with valid, if not the same, answers and solutions. How to communicate the wit of Mozart, the savage irony of Shostakovich? You could describe the finale of Mozart's 39th Symphony as ending with an abrupt truncation of its all-pervasive seven-note theme or you could take the theory and characterise it thus: "the wood-

ground under the heel of Vengero's bow." A little imagination *does* go a long way. Of course, all this is presupposing that a critic's own musicality is sound. You cannot recognise what you do not yourself feel. Which brings me to the thorny issue of "those who can't do write" - the critic as frustrated or failed performer. Well, leaving aside the equally contentious view that those who can do more often than not can't write, I find myself occupying the middle-ground position of doer and writer. Eight years as a professional actor and much longer as an amateur musician (percussionist, if you must know - Sir Simon Rattle has the dirt on my cymbal-playing) has helped me to appreciate, among other things, the vulnerability of per-

formers. And that's an insight I wouldn't be without. Of course it doesn't mean that I'm never guilty of hurtful criticism (heaven knows I've been on the receiving end of it), but I do believe that it tempers the temptation to be personal and/or destructive. The soprano Anne Evans once publicly threw a glass of red wine over the opera critic Tom Sutcliffe (not to be confused with our own Thomas Sutcliffe) with words to the effect of "Reggie and the company would like to buy you a drink" - not because his review of English National Opera's *Parsifal* was unfavourable (which it was), but because it was disrespectful of the then elderly and frail Reginald Goodall, a distinguished Wagnerian whose conducting Sutcliffe had described

as coming and going "like a radio whose battery is running down". Whatever the truth of his observation, the choice of simile undermined it. If there were a Geneva Convention on critical engagement, those eight words might be considered "cruel and unusual". As an opera critic, you are a theatre critic, too. Gone are the days (well, almost) when production was a kind of window-dressing expressly designed to cause as little disturbance as possible to the great and the good who just happened to be singing there. Productions have grown more challenging, more searching, and in some cases more perverse. But without some theatrical nous (and a degree of insider knowledge), how can you hope to distinguish between the empty vessels and the genuinely insightful? The answer is simple: experience, and a passion for what makes theatre work for an audience. And by "audience" I mean a receptive audience, who enjoys a challenge. As a member of that audience, but one charged with evaluating the success or failure of a show, I am expected to apply specialised knowledge to my gut reactions. As an actor, I have known the terrible, sinking feeling of being marooned by directors who say "trust me" or "do you see what I'm getting at?" or "can you give me more... well, you know..." more often than they give direction. I have known directors with lively minds and great ideas but not the skills to put them on stage. When Nigel Lowery's disastrous Royal Opera production of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* opened last year, it amazed me that in among all the hellfire and damnation of the reviews, nobody really explored the fact that most of the problems lay with the execution. Here was Lowery, a gifted designer, unable to reason why his ever-fertile drawing-board had failed, to deliver on stage. But then again, the lengths to which this critic went to do so will have been met with impatience in some quarters. Get a life, Seckerson, say it, you hated it. Yes, but...

And that's where the art of criticism begins. But it is read, really read, taken to heart, pondered, even acted upon? Performers are always telling us that they never read reviews. Well, they don't. Do they? Or is that just the bad reviews? Funny how they always flaunt the good ones. Then again, the composer Michael Berkeley revised his *Viola Concerto* specifically addressing criticisms raised in my review - a fact that I relate not to demonstrate how clever or powerful I am, but to illustrate that criticism need not necessarily result in a them-and-us situation; it can lead to a healthy and constructive exchange of ideas. Symbiosis. Criticism in action. At least until the next time I'm asked whether I liked it or not.



THE CRITICAL
CONDITION

From busk till dawn

Spare a thought - and some change - for the talented musicians playing on a corner near you

IF THIS is the season of goodwill, let's forget the pomp and circumstance of the big orchestras, and the overpaid megalomaniacs who wave a stick at them. Consider instead the opposite end of the snob spectrum: let's go down among the buskers. And I don't mean industrial-strength Bolivian bands, or winsome waifs with a penny whistle and a dog. I mean the people who brave public humiliation, police harassment and other adverse conditions of all kinds to create music which is, by any standards, good.

One of the high points of my musical year occurred outside a London Sainsbury's, where I was transported to the American South by a young man with an electric guitar and a truly Orphic touch. Another was thanks to a Romanian clarinet-and-acordion duo who hopped on to my train at Leicester Square, hopped off at King's Cross, and in between played Viennese classics with impeccable panache. They couldn't stay to talk; they just took our money and ran. You find such people everywhere on the Underground, plucking and blowing in corridors or at the base of escalators, boldly ignoring the orders to stop that blare from loudspeakers above their heads.

Many buskers work alone, but some hunt in packs. In the interests of science, I watch a succession of such groups in that neat little open-air theatre formed by one of the sunken courtyards in the Covent Garden Piazza.

First to take their stand behind the semicircle of brass studs - busking here is strictly policed - is a string group led

SIGHT READINGS



MICHAEL
CHURCH

by an Irish bassist-clown who achieves miracles of audience participation without once stepping the magic line. Next comes a string quartet that wouldn't be out of place at the Wigmore Hall. Then come two singers announcing themselves as Joan Sutherland and Renata Tebaldi, who deliver a non-stop feast of Mozart and Puccini while taking it in turns to dash round with the begging bowl, before finishing with a luxurious rendering of the "Flower Duet" from *Lakmé*.

They seem a bolly convivial bunch, but cameras and notebooks make them instantly uneasy. While some are studying at the London conservatories, others are "resting" professionals whose chances at audition might, they say, be threatened if their busking came to light. They are also understandably loth to say what they earn, though £80 a day seems the average: not terrible, but not easy money for singers who must bust a gut to be heard unamplified. Some-



Street life: not an easy option

Laurie Lewis

times, says Tebaldi, wonderful things happen: last Christmas they found two tightly folded £50 notes at the bottom of the bowl. Sutherland has this job to thank for meeting the man she is about to wed, but they won't busk connubially; you can't marry a voice and a violin.

Many of the string-players here are Chinese. One of the violinists in the Wigmore-standard quartet is a Hong Kong engineering draughtsman named Kai Choi, who is the founder/co-ordinator of an unusual organisation. Sigma consists of a floating population of anything between 30 and 60 players, whom Choi directs wherever there is either an opportunity or - in the case of private parties - demand. Choi admits that giving up his designing career was initially a risk, and that it took time to find collaborators with the right combination of qualities, for musicians are by nature perfectionists, and busking requires a thick skin plus a theatrical ability to "project". In

the beginning he hugged a huge box of sheet music to every gig, but he soon realised what the public wanted, and found that it went over better if played from memory. He modestly eschews the virtuosic guff that musicians usually use to describe their "outreach" aims, but outreach this is, and of the best possible kind.

When I ask what sort of living this game provides, he winces. "Let's call it a way of life." A stable way? "Not really. There are now so many groups that the ecosystem has been destroyed." A year ago there were so many players competing for the available cash that some gave up and went elsewhere. Only the toughest survive.

But some go on to great things. After 20 years' slog, the Cambridge flautist Michael Copley has won serious fame with his Classic Buskers group. Nigel Kennedy used to busk, as did many other pillars of the musical establishment. Brian Hawkins, head of strings at the Royal College of Music,

supports it unconditionally. "It's excellent experience. I used to do it, and I'm pleased when my students do so. It takes bottle."

HAWKINS and his friends deserve an accolade this week for responding to this column's recent appeal on behalf of the beleaguered music students in Tirana. There is a desperate shortage of sheet music in Albania's arts academy, and a total absence of decent instruments; several conservatoires at the richer end of Europe are now laying plans to ship out their cast-off violins and cellos, plus some of the barrow-loads of scores that are regularly bequeathed to them. Anyone wanting to make direct contact with the academy should write to its vice-rector, Bujar Sykja, c/o Arts Academy, Tirana, or fax him on 00 355 422 5488.

There is yet another conduit for those who want to lend a hand, in the form of a trust set up by June Emerson, a music publisher. The Albanian Musicians' Trust (Windmill House, York YO6 4HF) helps pay for scholarships for outstanding young musicians, and tries to mitigate the havoc that political anarchy has wrought in their early education. To get into the mood, listen to two marvellous CDs of Albanian music that have just been released. Albanian Village Music (Heritage HYCD40) consists of dances recorded in Tirana in the Thirties, and *Folk Music of Albania* (Topic TSCD904), collected in the Sixties, contains songs which, to Western ears, sound ravishingly strange.

ON THE AIR

ANTHONY PAYNE

THE BIRTHS on consecutive days of two giants of late-20th-century music prompted a celebration of unusual breadth on BBC Radio 3 last week. Messiaen is, of course, no longer with us, but on what would have been his 90th birthday we heard a whole evening of his music and that of related composers, interspersed with commentary and discussion.

Next day, it was the turn of the still tumultuously creative Elliott Carter, and a broadcast from this year's Edinburgh Festival filling the better part of the evening brought us his recent *Clarinet Concerto*, in the company of some new compositions by Manoury and Boulez.

After the pusillanimous programme-planning that has marked rather too much of Radio 3's output in recent times, this generous helping of thought-provoking and emotionally resonant music struck a blow for the cause of serious modernism. Hooray for adult contemporary music, as my wife put it.

Apart from the life-enhancing vision of their work, each of these two composers spearheaded an approach to composition that can now be seen to have been of considerable historic importance. The complexity of Carter's onwards, is now central to the idea of the maximalism that marks one of the outer reaches of our age's music, while Messiaen, himself not averse to textual and thematic complexity also

pre-shadowed some of the prime elements of post-modernism. As we were reminded in one of the evening's discussion interludes, the mixture of ideas in his *Turangalila* symphony was considered an affront to musical taste when first heard here.

In fact, Messiaen posed considerable aesthetic problems during his middle years, and one of his most famous pupils, Pierre Boulez, made it quite clear that for all his admiration of the more constructivist aspect of his teacher's

At first it seemed a little dry but, on repetition, more and more revealing of desert mysteries

music, he could not take the uninhibited sweetness of much of the harmony - that very dichotomy which encouraged the post-moderns to mix styles and manners.

This was one among many somewhat perplexing aspects of Messiaen's art, and much light was thrown on them by friends and pupils during the course of the evening. The sharply alert yet intellectually generous George Benjamin recalled much of interest from his times in Messiaen's company, and his perceptions continually fascinated. The influence of Messiaen's organ-playing on his static block structures was mentioned, for each newly registered passage in an organ performance requires a

halt for stop-pulling, initiating a structural habit. Then there was the musical influence of Debussy, which Benjamin heard not only in the other's colouristic harmony but also in those aspects of his style which are conspicuously non-Debussian. It was as if Messiaen was consciously trying to avoid Debussy's manner of thinking while admitting the profound effect of his harmonic world - a strangely compelling argument.

The use of chordal harmonies as precisely evocative objects *sonores* lies at a great distance from Carter's linear dialectic, yet that composer's new *Clarinet Concerto*, heard the following evening, celebrated the explosion of sunset colours in the south-western desert of the United States, an almost Messiaenic idea. Carter's response to that vast, quiet and comparatively featureless landscape yielded a very characteristic unfolding of conflicting counterpoints, nevertheless, at a first hearing a little dry, but on repetition increasingly revealing of desert mysteries.

In this same richly endowed programme we heard Manoury's splendidly inventive and texturally vital *Fragment pour un Portrait*, and Boulez's bewitching *Sur Incises* for three each of pianos, harps and percussion groups, something of a titillating homage to Stravinsky, Bartok and Messiaen.

NEW FILMS

THE PRINCE OF EGYPT (U)
Director: Brenda Chapman. Simon Wells.
Steve Hickner.
Voiced by: Val Kilmer, Ralph Fiennes, Michelle Pfeiffer.
DreamWorks honcho Jeffrey Katzenberg envisaged his cartoon Life of Moses "painted by Claude Monet and photographed by David Lean". The end result winds up as *The Ten Commandments* by way

of Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. West End: ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Empire Leicester Square, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

GENERAL RELEASE

ANTZ (PG)
See *The Independent Recommends*, right.
West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Phoenix Cinema, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Green, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY (U)
In the follow-up to *Babe*, knockabout comedy is kept to a minimum in favour of a bleak animatronic fairytale. West End: ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Rio Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

BLADE (R)
A techno soundtrack bumps and grinds behind this monotonous arcade-game thriller about a New York vampire-killer tackling a power-crazed Jew bloodsucker. Noise and martial-arts action mask its tiny pedigree.
West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

THE BOYS (R)
Out of jail after serving a sentence for GBH, oldest "boy" Brett Sprague (David Wenham) moves back into his mum's drab suburban home, terrorises his girlfriend and turns his younger brothers into petty henchmen. *The Boys* spotlights the downside of life Down Under - it's potent, predatory stuff.
West End: Metro, Ritzy Cinema

DANCING AT LUGHNASSA (PG)
Less a dance, more of a trudge, this Ireland-set saga is given backbone by Meryl Streep's regal performance. West End: Curzon Mayfair, Notting Hill Coronet, Rio Cinema

DEAD MAN'S CURVE (15)
Writer-director Dan Rosen must have had some terrible experiences at university. All the students at his nameless American college are trying to butcher each other, led into temptation by an obscure regulation that awards straight-A grades to the room-mates of suicides. Though not as deliciously nasty as the *Scream* films, *Dead Man's Curve* delivers a respectable quota of drive-in shocks.
West End: ABC Piccadilly

ELIZABETH (15)
Shekhar Kapur's follow-up to *Bandit Queen* is the story of a female figurehead struggling to gain purchase in a male world. But Kapur largely neglects the opportunities for fun in a story of independence triumphing over cruelty.
West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Odeon Haymarket, Odeon Mezzanine, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Virgin Fulham Road

FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS (R)
Terence Gilliam's adaptation tilts at Ralph Steadman's cartoon for its tale of a drug-fuelled journalistic assignment. The film soon descends into a carnival of narcotic lunacy, with the one stand-out being Johnny Depp - who brings Hunter S. Thompson into bald-headed, pigeon-toed life.
West End: ABC Baker Street, Empire Leicester Square, Odeon Camden Town, Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Haymarket

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (U)
See *The Independent Recommends*, right.
West End: Curzon Soho, Gate Notting Hill, Richmond Filmhouse, Ritzy Cinema

LAST LUGGAGE (PG)
An uncertain soap opera, focusing on the ebbs and flows within a Hasidic family in 1970s Holland. Fitful as drama, the film comes to life as a showcase for its high-profile performers plus rising star Laura Fraser.
West End: ABC Swiss Centre, Curzon Minima, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, Richmond Filmhouse, Screen on Baker Street, Screen on the Hill

LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS (R)
Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels follows the lead of Tarantino, but the film's defining characteristic is its resilient morality.
West End: ABC Pantons Street, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Mezzanine, Warner Village West End

THE MASK OF ZORRO (PG)
This gaudy swashbuckler gallops full speed through 19th-century California in the company of Antonio Banderas's authentically Hispanic do-gooder. A bite-sized history lesson on West Coast politics struggles amid a lot of colourful duels and clattering set-pieces.
West End: Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road

MULAN (U)
In Disney's animated feature, a girl disguises herself as a soldier to spare her ailing father from the certain death of combat. This set-up has got it all: a pro-active heroine who does not want to tend a man or pet woodland animals; a strong father/daughter relationship; honour and nobility; and, of course, cross-dressing. It's also one of the most visually innovative movies that Disney has ever made.
West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Mezzanine, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Warner Village West End

MY NAME IS JOE (15)
See *The Independent Recommends*, right.
West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, Screen on the Hill, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Haymarket

THE NEGOTIATOR (15)
Samuel L. Jackson and Kevin Spacey go head to head in Gray's thrilling drama. The script has a predilection for lunk-headed swearing that sounds uneasy in the mouths of such articulate, rhetorical performers. West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Rio Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

OUT OF SIGHT (15)
George Clooney plays the law-breaking hero as a down-and-dirty version of Cary Grant, and turns in the best performance of his career so far. He seems to be a grown-up film star when most of Hollywood's male heart-throbs don't look old enough to get served in a pub. West End: Clapham Picture House, Empire Leicester Square, Gate Notting Hill, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

THE PARENT TRAP (PG)
The Parent Trap catches Disney cannibalising its own back catalogue; re-heating its 1961 Hayley Mills heart-warmer into a spry, cross-cultural caper starring Lindsay Lohan as the separated-at-birth twin sisters (one British, one American) determined to get their parents (Natalie Richardson, Dennis Quaid) back together.
West End: Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea

A PERFECT MURDER (15)
With Hollywood awash with dumb re-makes, the news that Hitchcock's classic *Dial M for Murder* was to be reheated did not bode well. But this is gold-plated trash: the sort of thing Hollywood does better than anyone else. West End: ABC Pantons Street, Warner Village West End

THE PHILADELPHIA STORY (U)
Sublime cinema. It's a fast-talking romantic comedy of course, but there's nothing silly or trivial about it. George Cukor's movie has a strange and melancholy heart and Katherine Hepburn's unsatisfied beiress sheds real tears.
West End: Curzon Soho, Renoir

PLAYING GOD (R)
Cracker director Andy Wilson suffers a rude lesson in Hollywood politics with this glossy but garbled thriller about a junkie doctor (David Duchovny) embroiled with a gang of counterfeiters headed by a hammy Tim Hutton.
West End: Warner Village West End

RONIN (15)
See *The Independent Recommends*, right.
West End: Odeon Kensington, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road

RUSH HOUR (15)
Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker star in this hit-and-miss affair. West End: Elephant & Castle Coronet, Gate Notting Hill, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

SLUMS OF BEVERLY HILLS (18)
See *The Independent Recommends*, right.
West End: ABC Piccadilly, ABC Shaftesbury Avenue

TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE (R)
Once ridiculously held up as a video nasty, *Tobe Hooper's* thrif-shop chiller is, rather, a unwholy celebration of the blood-hust urges within white-trash America, ushering a bunch of generic teens to their doom among a family of unemployed slaughtermen. Explicit violence is thin on the ground; instead it's the alien, voodoo mood which dominates. West End: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY (15)
The latest comedy from the tasteless writer-director team of Peter and Bobby Farrelly. The film is basically a soft-centred romantic comedy of the kind that drifts out of Hollywood on a regular basis. The gags never amount to more than vulgar icing on an unexceptionally bland cake.
West End: Odeon Mezzanine, Screen on the Green, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket

VELVET GOLDMINE (18)
Jonathan Rhys Meyers plays is a Bowie-esque idol in glitter make-up; his friend and mentor Curt Wild (Ewan McGregor) is a self-destructive US rocker in the Lou Reed-iggy Pop mould. The story of how these characters are bound together is told in a film brimming with intelligent ideas.
West End: Curzon Soho, Rio Cinema

LA VIE REVEE DES ANGES (THE DREAM LIFE OF ANGELS) (18)
Isa (Elodie Bouchez) is a gamine but impoverished drifter who meets Marie (Natacha Regnier) while tending at a clothes sweatshop. They become friends and move in together in a stunning first feature for Erick Zanca.
West End: ABC Swiss Centre, Curzon Minima, Phoenix Cinema, Screen on the Green

THE WISDOM OF CROCODILES (15)
Jude Law plays a contemporary vampire who wines and dines his victims before he goes for the jugular. West End: ABC Pantons Street

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

THE FIVE BEST FILMS

My Name is Joe (15)
All that one would expect from a Ken Loach film - humour, indignation and emotional sympathy - driven by Peter Mullan's scarily intense performance as a recovering alcoholic.

Antz (PG)
Computer-animated comedy voiced by a stellar cast stars Woody Allen as a worker ant who becomes an unlikely opponent of the colony's totalitarian regime. Good fun, and Allen's best work in a while.

Slums of Beverly Hills (15)
Tamar Jenkins' feature debut is a modest but winning rite-of-passage movie about a family coping with poverty in LA's richest suburb. Alan Arkin gives an acting masterclass as the dad.

Ronin (15)
John Frankenheimer's action thriller (above) is buttressed by a fine international cast (Robert De Niro, Jean Reno, Stellan Skarsgard), moody French locations and a clutch of supercharged car chases.

It's a Wonderful Life (U. Curzon Soho)
Despite its reputation as a national treasure, Frank Capra's hymn to smalltown selflessness is fraught with all kinds of contradictions and blind spots. James Stewart, granted a vision of how life would have been had he never been born, is magnificent in the lead role.

ANTHONY QUINN

THE FIVE BEST PLAYS

Hindle Wakes
Royal Exchange, Manchester
Spectacularly refurbished after the 1996 bombing, this theatre bounces back in fine resilient form with the excellent production which had to be aborted then. To 9 Jan

Martin Guerre
West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds
It's third time lucky for this much-rewritten Boubli/Schubert musical. In Connal Morrison's starkly involving production, it finally emerges as a tighter, magnificent show. To 13 Feb

The Invention of Love
Theatre Royal, Haymarket
Witty fantasia (right) by Tom Stoppard on the twin passions of AE Housman: scholarship and an unavailable heterosexual friend. To 4 Apr

Copenhagen
Cottesloe, National Theatre
Michael Frayn's profound and haunting meditation on science, morality and the mysteries of human motivation. To 27 Jan

The Boy Who Fell Into a Book
Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough
Typically witty and ingenious concept from Alan Ayckbourn - here wearing his children's dramatist hat. To 9 Jan

PAUL TAYLOR

THE FIVE BEST SHOWS

Louise Bourgeois Serpentine Gallery
Veteran French-American sculptress, still a leading light at 87, shows new installations in which a giant mother/spider presides over images of spinning and weaving, restoration and decay. To 10 Jan

Claude Lorrain British Museum
One hundred drawings by the great French classical landscape painter, including his remarkably vivid outdoor studies of woods and streams. To 10 Jan

Bridget Riley Abbott Hall, Kendal
A small retrospective, spanning the career of top British abstractionist Riley (right) - from the shimmering monochromes of her early Sixties oil art fame, to colour, stripes, diagonals, curves. To 31 Jan

Edward Burne-Jones Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery
Centenary exhibition gathers together many favourites illustrating Burne-Jones's romantic and medievalist nether world. To 17 Jan

Chris Ofili Whitworth Gallery, Manchester
The 1998 Turner Prize winner is an upbeat original, his surfaces dense and decorative, with swirls of dots, eyes, Afros and black icons, and incorporating mutant balls of elephant dung. To 24 Jan

TOM LUBBOCK

CINEMA

WEST END

ABC BAKER STREET
(0870-902 0418) @ Baker Street
Babe: Pig in the City 12.00pm, 2.00pm, 4.00pm, 6.00pm, 8.00pm, 10.00pm
Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas 3.40pm, 8.00pm
The Prince of Egypt 1.40pm, 4pm, 6.20pm, 8.35pm

ABC PANTONS STREET
(0870-902 0404) @ Piccadilly
Circus The Last Days of Disco 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6pm, 8.25pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6pm, 8.30pm
A Perfect Murder 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6pm, 8.30pm
The Wisdom of Crocodiles 1.10pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.30pm

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Victory 1.10pm, 6.10pm

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Texas Chainsaw Massacre 1.35pm, 3.55pm, 6.35pm, 8.30pm

ABC SWISS CENTRE
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The Governess 1.45pm, 4.05pm, 6.25pm, 8.45pm
Left Luggage 1.30pm, 6.55pm
Rien Ne Va Plus 4.45pm, 9.15pm
La Vie Revee des Anges 1.25pm, 3.45pm, 6.05pm, 8.25pm

ABC TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD
(0870-902 0414) @ Tottenham
Court Road Antz 1.15pm, 6.35pm
Babe: Pig in the City 1.05pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
My Name is Joe 8.25pm, 9.05pm
The Prince of Egypt 1.20pm, 3.50pm, 6.50pm, 9.30pm

BARBICAN SCREEN
(0171-638 8891) @ Barbican
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The Prince of Egypt 5.30pm, 8pm

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La Vie Revee des Anges 8.40pm

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The Philadelphia Story 12noon, 4.30pm, 7pm
Velvet Goldmine 3.30pm, 9.15pm

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The Prince of Egypt 4pm, 6.20pm, 8.35pm
Rush Hour 6.30pm, 8.45pm

EMPIRE LEICESTER SQUARE
(0990-888990) @ Leicester
Square Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas 12.40pm, 3.30pm, 6.10pm, 9pm, 11.40pm
Out of Sight 12.10pm, 2.55pm, 5.50pm, 8.35pm, 11.20pm
The Prince of Egypt 10.45am, 1pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.30pm, 11pm

GATE NOTTING HILL
(0171-727 4043) @ Notting Hill
Gate It's a Wonderful Life 4.10pm (+ Short: Whoosh!) Out of Sight 4.40pm, 6.40pm
Rush Hour 9.05pm, 11.15pm

HAMMERSMITH VIRGIN
(0870-907 0718) @ Ravenscourt
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Enemy of the State 6.20pm, 9pm
The Mask of Zorro 12noon, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm
The Parent Trap 12.10pm, 3pm, 5.50pm, 8.40pm

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FRIDAY RADIO

INDEPENDENT PURSUITS

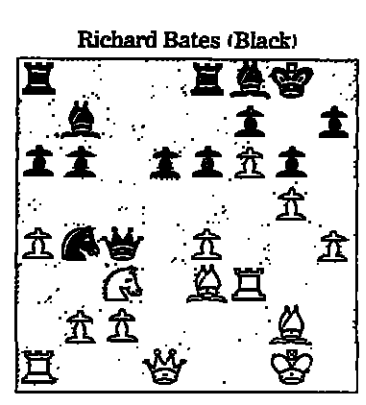
CHESS

JON SPEELMAN

TOP ORGANISER Adam Raouf's Oxford International Chess Festival today passes its midpoint with the fifth of the nine rounds. Forty-six players are in action in the Keble room at the Oxford Moat House Hotel in four separate events. After three rounds, Julian Hodgson was leading the Grandmaster A on 2.5/3, ahead of John Nunn, Neil McDon-

White: Julian Hodgson
Black: Jonathan Rowson
Trompowsky

1 d4 Nf6	18 h5 gxf5
2 Bg5 e6	19 Qb3 h4
3 e4 h6	20 exd6 cxd6
4 Bxf6 Qxf6	21 f5
5 c3 d6	22 f6 Nxf6
6 Bb3 g6	23 Nxf6 Bxf6
7 Ne2 Bg7	24 Nf4 Rd6
8 0-0-0	25 Bc2 Rg8
9 f4 Nd7	26 Nh5 Bg5
10 Nd2: Qe7	27 Qd3 f6
11 Qe1 b6	28 Nxf6 Bxf6
12 Qg3 Bb7	29 Rxf6 Qg7
13 e5 Rad8	30 Qf3 Rce
14 Ne4 b5	31 Rf7 Rxc3
15 Rael b4	32 Rsg7 Rxf3
16 h4 hxc3	33 Rh7 mate
17 bxc3 Kh8	



Richard Bates (Black)

One essential element of tournament play is the "balance of terror" - particularly important in all-playalls, which often throw up or rather down a "victim" whom the other participants try especially hard to beat. One reaction is to conserve energy and, perhaps, improve a veneer of invincibility by taking quick draws. So it is that there have already been several of these short but pointed affairs. But happily the other side of the coin, the extreme violence unleashed when peace is not agreed, has also been much in evidence...

In his favourite Trompowsky opening, Hodgson got central control in return for the two bishops. With 18 h5 he initiated a dangerous attack. The pawn sacrifice 22 f6! kept the centre closed - if the knight retreats Black can try 22... e5! It all looked very smooth but in fact only after 28... Bxf6? did White cement his advantage - 28... Rg7 was fine for Black.

Finally, a ferociously crude finish from Harriet Hunt. Bates attempted, as you are supposed to, to get central counterplay against her wing attack, but was far too late. At the end after 26... Kxh8 27 Qh3+ Kg8 28 Qh6 forces mate. 21 h5 d2 hxf6 hxf6 23 Rh3 Bc5 24 Qg4 Bxc3+ 25 Kh1! Bf2 26 Rh6+! 1-0

BRIDGE

ALAN HIRON

IT is odd how a poor choice of opening lead can have a domino effect. This deal struck me as an excellent example (or, as I was defending, a very irritating example). South, playing the odd mixture of a weak no-trump and five card majors, opened One Club and North responded One Diamond. South's rebid of 1 No-trumps showed 15-17 points and he went on to game when North raised to Two.

Love all; dealer South

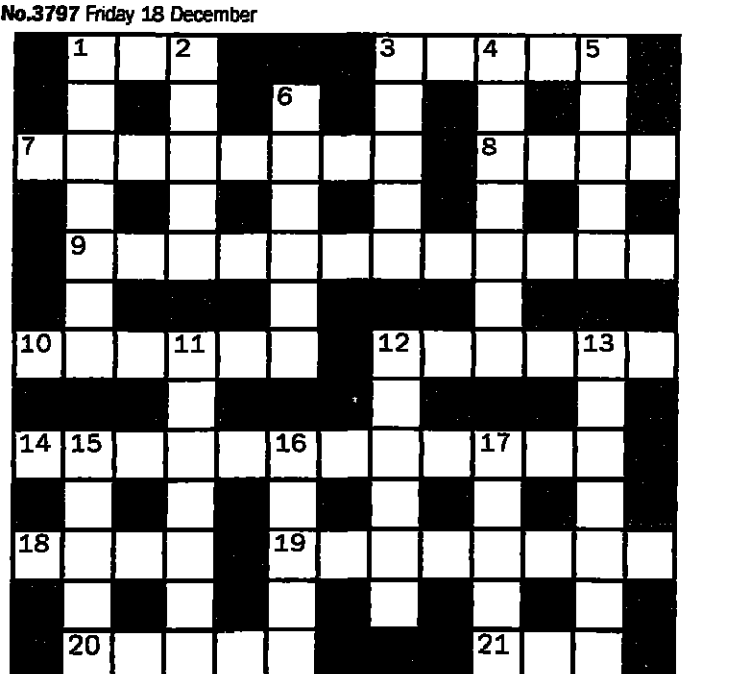
North		South	
♠ 8 5 3		♠ 10 6	
♥ 5 3		♥ 9 8 4	
♦ A 10 8 6		♦ J 5	
♣ K J 7 3		♣ A 6 5	

West	East
♣ 9	♠ J 7 4 2
♦ K Q J	♥ 10 7 6 2
♥ 7 4 3 2	♦ K Q 9
♠ Q 9 8 4	♣ 10 2

West, on lead against 3 No-trumps, judged that South might well hold a four-card heart suit and selected a nondescript ♣ V for his opening salvo. (Even my grandmother would have led ♣ K - if it seems to be working badly, there will be plenty of time for a switch.) Declarer played low from dummy and, after winning with ♣ Q, I returned a low heart. South ducked this but won the heart continuation and ran ♣ J to my king. West won the next heart lead and exited safely with another diamond.

Discarding in front of declarer, I had the choice of unguarding the hearts or releasing another spade. I chose the spade but it did not matter - South's losing heart went away and now ♠ 10 provided the ninth trick. The cumulative effect of the lead - our hearts became blocked, one of my entries was taken away, and in an unforeseen fashion - so the defenders had organised the perfect timing for a squeeze. And if West had guarded the spades? No matter, for he has to keep his ♣ Q and would also have had to come down to only two spades.

CONCISE CROSSWORD



- ACROSS
- Vocally express disapproval (3)
 - Stage (5)
 - Large snake (8)
 - Paint unskillfully (4)
 - Set of digits assigned to identify product (6,6)
 - Attack (6)
 - End (6)
 - Public communication facility (9,3)
 - Comfortable seat (4)
 - Cold sweet (3-5)
 - Poem (5)
 - Consume (3)
- DOWN
- Extra payments (7)
 - Happen (5)
 - Unadorned (5)
 - Belly (7)
 - Escape from (5)
 - Involve (6)
 - Mean (7)
 - Digit (6)
 - Navigating instrument (7)
 - Run away together (5)
 - Hirsute (5)
 - Push violently (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 1 Start, 4 Earn (Star turn), 8 Ragtime, 9 Aggro, 10 Meek, 11 Scrag-end, 12 Bone-leeching, 15 Backfire, 17 Beam, 20 Largo, 21 Abandon, 22 Truff, 23 Debit, DOWN: 1 Segment, 2 Artful, 3 Thenceforward, 4 Emancipate, 5 Rogue, 6 Trum, 7 Hot dog, 12 Babel, 15 Lift-off, 14 Ice-boat, 16 Cargo, 18 Meet, 19 Barb.

PICK OF THE DAY

MICHAEL HASTINGS, of *Ton and Vin* fame, has written *The Lost Explorer* (9pm R4). It's set in the US and South America around 1950: Brian Fawcett makes a living lecturing about his father, who disappeared in the Brazilian jungle while searching for a lost city. Nicholas Le Prevost plays Fawcett while Lorelei King is the American woman who falls in love with him, and sets about

rescuing him from his delusions about his father; Stacy Keach (right) plays Fawcett's agent. Cardboard America and some fairly implausible circumstances bulk it out; underneath, the play is skinny but kind of cute. A seasonal Performance on 3 (7.30pm R3) has settings of *In Dulci Jubilo* and lots of German Baroque.



ROBERT HANKS

is joined by actor Samuel West and wine writer Janice Robinson to review the latest books on music. On the shelves this month are a biography of controversial soprano Maria Callas, Peter Peeling's biography of jazz pianist Bill Evans, an irreverent look at composers' private lives in *Grand Passions* and *Broken Hearts* by Basil Hewitt. 8.35 Concert, part 2. Music by Scheidt, Hieronymus Praetorius and Buxtehude. 9.20 Postscript. Kevin Jackson unravels the stories behind classic works of European literature. 5: Jan Potocki: 'The Manuscript Found in Saragossa'. The extraordinary story of Polish adventurer, ethnographer, aristocrat and activist Jan Potocki (1761-1815). Written in French, his novel 'The Manuscript Found in Saragossa' combines horror, philosophy and enlightenment rationalism, and anticipates techniques of horror-writing used by novelists today. 9.45 John Williams. Celebrated guitarist John Williams plays music by Albeniz and Bach. 10.00 Hear and Now. Verity Sharp talks to Irvine Arditti about a recently released CD of chamber music by Elliott Carter. Fragment for string quartet; Cello Sonata; Fugue for piano solo; Duo for violin and cello; 80+ for piano; String Quartet No 5. Ursula Oppens (piano), Arditti Quartet. 11.30 And His Mother Called Him Bill.

12.00 Composer of the Week: Elliott Carter. (R) 1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night. RADIO 4 (92.4-94.6MHz FM) 6.00 today. 9.00 NEWS; Desert Island Discs. 9.45 Serial: Dear Bill. 10.00 NEWS; Woman's Hour. 11.00 NEWS; Strictly Conventional. 11.30 The Smart Couple. 12.00 NEWS; You and Yours. 1.00 The World at One. 12.57 Weather. 1.30 Screen Test. 2.00 NEWS; The Archers. 2.15 Afternoon Play: Grounded. 3.00 NEWS; Making History. 3.30 Stafford on Humour. 3.45 Feedback. 4.00 NEWS; Open Book. 4.30 The Message. 5.00 PM. 6.00 Six O'Clock News. 6.30 True Lies. 7.00 NEWS; The Archers. 7.15 Front Row. Francine Stock with the arts programme. 7.45 Under One Roof. With Jenni Murray and guests. Drama: 'Under One Roof' by Jenny Landreth, based on the original stories by Michele Hanson. As Christmas approaches, shopping, cooking and clubbing reach frantic proportions for Gillian, her daughter Chloe and her mother Bernice. Nativity is in the air even for Molly the dog. With Janet Main and Edna Dora. Director Marilyn Irmie. Part 5. 8.00 NEWS; Any Questions? Jonathan Dimbleby is joined in

Kettering, Northants, by panellists including Heather Hallett QC, chairman of the Bar, Kate Hoey, Home Office minister, Charlotte Raven, Guardian columnist, and Ann Widdowcombe, shadow Secretary of State for Health. 8.45 Letter from America. Alistair Cooke with another slice of Americana. 9.00 NEWS; The Friday Play: The Lost Explorer. By Michael Hastings. The story of Brian Fawcett, whose father never returned from an expedition in the Brazilian jungle. Only his boots and map were recovered. Now Brian travels the world giving talks on his father's career, all the time hoping that one day someone will tell him that his father is still alive. With Nicholas Le Prevost and Stacy Keach. Director Peter Kavanagh. See *Pick of the Day*. 10.00 The World Tonight. With Robin Lustig. 10.45 Book at Bedtime: Spiderweb. By Penelope Lively, read by Stephanie Cole. Final part. 11.00 Late Tackle. Eleanor O'Driscoll and guests take a sporting look at the festive period. 11.30 The Men in Black. 12.30 The Late Book: Aphrodite. 12.48 Shipping Forecast. 1.00 As World Service. 5.30 World News. 5.35 Shipping Forecast. 5.40 Inshore Forecast. 5.45 Prayer for the Day. 5.47 Leisure Update. 5.56 - 6.00 Weather.

SATELLITE AND CABLE

PICK OF THE DAY

NOT ALL big-screen adaptations of TV series work - as anyone who has seen *The Avengers* will know. But *Mission: Impossible* (8pm Sky Premier), a glossy reworking by Brian De Palma of the classic TV series, has more than enough moments to keep viewers attention. Tom Cruise (right), who seems to have spent almost the past decade working on Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*, was not content with just starring as agent Ethan Hunt;

he also co-produced the picture, which showcases enough hi-tech gadgets to rival James Bond. Since she first delivered an Oscar-nominated performance in Steven Spielberg's *The Color Purple*, Whoopi Goldberg has had an up-and-down career, with highs such as *Ghost* and *The Player* and lows like *Sister Act 2* and *Jurassic Park*. She is profiled in tonight's *Femmes Fatales* (8pm Sky Moviemax).



JAMES RAMPTON

from Space (5892654). 9.00 The Barefoot Sushman (580248). 10.00 America Exposed (581857). 10.30 America Exposed (580505). 11.00 Weapons of War - Scorched Earth (581851). 12.00 Empire of the East (583589). 1.00 Connections 2 by James Burke (589102). 1.30 Ancient Warriors (5814703). 2.00 Close. SKY ONE 7.00 The Simpsons (56031). 7.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show (58982). 8.30 Hollywood Squares (5825). 9.00 Gully! (20789). 10.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (58050). 11.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show (58569). 12.00 Jerry Jones (586574). 12.45 The Special K Collection (53789576). 1.00 Days of Our Lives (5749050). 1.55 The Special K Collection (7709963). 2.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (587567). 2.55 The Special K Collection (2574012). 3.00 Jerry Jones (5842234). 3.55 The Special K Collection (5805760). 4.00 Gully! (58147). 5.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (5826). 6.00 Married with Children (4857). 6.30 Friends (5437). 7.00 The Simpsons (4875). 7.30 The Simpsons (7321). 8.00 The Simpsons (5873). 8.30 The Simpsons (5878). 9.00 World's Scarier Police Chases 4 (58044). 10.00 Cops (5647). 10.30 Cops (7248). 11.00 Friends (58725). 11.30 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (52936). 12.30 Renaissance (2185). 1.30 Long Play (535977). SKY SPORTS 1 6.30 Futures in Sport (73294). 7.00 Sky Sports Centre (582879). 7.15 World

Wrestling Federation Superstars (504673). 8.15 Sky Sports Centre (584974). 8.30 Racing News (53012). 9.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (7892). 9.30 Spanish Football (58091). 11.00 Futbol Mundial (58566). 12.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (58988). 12.30 Futbol League Review (25741). 1.00 What a Weekend (7514). 1.30 Futbol Mundial (2202). 2.00 The Rugby Club (5825). 3.00 Survival of the Fittest (5886). 3.30 V-Max (3863). 4.00 Gillette World Sport Special (2470). 4.30 Trans World Sport (5815). 5.30 What a Weekend (2234). 6.30 Sky Sports Centre (58762). 7.00 Figure Skating (50499). 9.00 Rugby Union: Bermuda Masters (7058). 10.00 Sky Sports Centre (73873). 11.00 Hold the Back Page (58383). 12.00 Sports Centre (67074). 1.00 Wrestling Federation Raw (25987). 3.00 Hold the Back Page (54426). 4.00 Rugby Union: Bermuda Masters (58567). 5.00 - 6.00 Sky Sports Centre (58513). SKY SPORTS 2 7.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (340358). 7.30 Sky Sports Centre (572276). 7.45 Racing News (5878234). 8.15 What a Weekend (584788). 8.45 Sky Sports Centre (587168). 9.00 Tight Lines (585050). 10.00 The Rugby Club (58158). 11.00 What a Weekend (579148). 11.30 Ice Hockey (73802). 12.00 Pool (585854). 1.00 The Rugby Club (58158). 6.00 Rugby Union: Bermuda Masters (345107). 7.00 H2O (582005). 7.30 Pool (58058). 10.30 Wild Sports (236722). 11.00 Fig-

ure Skating (5890673). 1.00 Rugby Union: Bermuda Masters (552258). 2.00 Sky Sports Centre (586722). 3.00 - 6.00 Friday Night Football Brentford vs Cambridge (580797). SKY SPORTS 3 11.30 Futures in Sport (4747487). 12.00 Trans World Sport (48043079). 1.00 Tight Lines (48029489). 2.00 Bobby Charlton's Football Scrapbook (534925). 3.00 Futbol Mundial (5380708). 4.00 Spanish Football (5778165). 6.00 MotoGP (5388882). 6.30 Wild Sports (5388844). 10.00 Friday Night Football Brentford vs Cambridge (5804383). 11.00 World Wrestling (477944). 12.00 Close. EUROSPORT 7.30 Equestrianism (2282). 8.30 Olympic Magazine (5709). 9.00 Bobsleigh (5549). 10.00 Alpine Skiing (582532). 11.25 Biathlon (444447). 12.45 Bobsleigh (586782). 2.00 Alpine Skiing (50383). 3.00 Biathlon (58078). 4.30 Luge (5805). 5.00 Football (10788). 7.00 Karling (58470). 8.00 Offroad (5848). 9.04 Equestrianism (58470). 10.30 Bowling (1047). 11.30 Xtrem Sports: You Action (70944). 12.30 Close. UK GOLD 7.00 Crossroads (461060). 7.30 Neighbours (4126873). 7.55 EastEnders (4835050). 8.30 The Bill (41470). 9.00 The Bill (583505). 9.30 Midsomer Murders (582944). 10.30 Angels (581254). 11.00 Dallas (575844). 11.55 Neighbours

REGIONAL TELEVISION VARIATIONS

BBC1 N IRELAND As BBC1 London except: 6.30 Newsline 6.30 (587). 9.30 Give My Head, Head (58062). 10.30 Film: Incident Proposal (5828). 11.30 The Stand-Up Show (57383). 12.35 Film: Critics 4 (584703). 2.30 Joins BBC News 24 (7634242). BBC1 SCOTLAND As BBC1 London except: 12.25 Na Luchanan Phiala (589325). 6.00 News (585). 6.30 Reporting Scotland: Weather (58176). 10.00 Film: Incident Proposal (5828). 11.30 The Stand-Up Show (57383). 12.35 Film: Critics 4 (584703). 1.55 BBC News 24 (7634242). ANGLO As Carillon except: 12.20 Anglo News and Weather (587247). 1.00 Dr. News (7125). 1.30 Home and Away (582888). 1.55 The Jerry Springer Show (720739). 2.40 A Splash of Colour (544627). 3.20 Anglo News and Weather

(580863). 5.30 Shortland Street (577605). 5.40 News; Weather (577605). 6.00 Home and Away (587429). 6.25 Anglo News (582503). 6.30 News (582503). 6.50 The Jerry Springer Show (577605). 12.40 Soundtrack (582416). 12.30 Pirata TV (54529). 1.00 Gods Gift (72529). 2.00 ClubVision (718242). 2.45 The Haunted Flank (58293). 3.45 Film: Impact (58163). 4.40 Haircut (5776242). 4.45 Nightscreen (4522908). 5.00 Coronation Street (58168). CENTRAL As Carillon except: 12.20 Central News and Weather (587247). 1.00 Wish You Were Here...? (7128). 2.45 Heart of the Country (581203). 5.40 Shortland Street (577605). 5.40 News; Weather (577605). 6.00 Home and Away (587429). 6.25 Central News and Weather (582503). 6.30 News and Weather (582498). 11.30 Tales from the Darkside (58282). 12.00 Short Story Centre (580908). 1.35 Juddier (584722). 5.20 Asian Eye (205155). HTV WALES As Carillon except: 10.15 This Morning (58248). 1.00 Shortland Street (7129). 1.30 Home and Away (5728632). 2.40 Summer Festivals (446227). 3.20 Meridian News (580863). 5.40 Home and Away (577605). 5.37 The Listings (717302). 6.00 Meridian Tonight (5459). 10.30 Meridian News (580863). 11.30

Jerry Springer (522558). 12.30 Soundtrack (58248). 12.30 Pirata TV (54529). 1.00 Gods Gift (72529). 2.00 ClubVision (718242). 2.45 The Haunted Flank (58293). 3.45 Film: Impact (58163). 4.40 Haircut (5776242). 4.45 Nightscreen (4522908). 5.00 Coronation Street (58168). HTV WEST As Carillon except: 10.15 This Morning (58248). 1.00 Shortland Street (7129). 1.30 Home and Away (5728632). 2.40 Summer Festivals (446227). 3.20 Meridian News (580863). 5.40 Home and Away (577605). 5.37 The Listings (717302). 6.00 Meridian Tonight (5459). 10.30 Meridian News (580863). 11.30

Street (544627). 3.45 ITN News Headlines; Weather (580105). 5.40 News; Weather (587682). 5.55 Calendar (254883). 6.30 Tonight (525). 11.30 Caprice's Travels (58162). TYNE TEES As Yorkshire except: 3.20 North East News (580863). 5.55 North East Weather (73769). 6.00 North East (5499). 10.30 North East News (32498). 5.40 As Channel 4 except: 12.00 Judge Joe Brown (547422). 12.30 Sesame Street (720606). 1.00 Planed Plan: Rhy's a Tom's Yanc (489648). 1.30 Killing of an Egg (584347). 4.00 The Italian Kitchen (534505). 4.30 Montel Williams (581254). 5.00 Planed Plan (580470). 5.30 Countdown (1132588). 6.00 Newydd (582605). 6.30 Hero (5863505). 7.00 Pabot Y Cwm (33327078). 7.25 Y Cwm Rhyll (577401). 8.00 Cwm Rhyll (583654). 8.30 Newydd (585578). 9.00 Pabot a1 Ram (212673). 10.00 Brookside (5873944). 10.35 Friends (442682). 11.05 Eurotrash (586673). 11.35 Harry Hill (7520383). 12.05 17 Friday (577605). 1.00 17 Saturday (577605). 1.30 The Divine David Presents (3270425). 4.55 Close.

Street (544627). 3.45 ITN News Headlines; Weather (580105). 5.40 News; Weather (587682). 5.55 Calendar (254883). 6.30 Tonight (525). 11.30 Caprice's Travels (58162). TYNE TEES As Yorkshire except: 3.20 North East News (580863). 5.55 North East Weather (73769). 6.00 North East (5499). 10.30 North East News (32498). 5.40 As Channel 4 except: 12.00 Judge Joe Brown (547422). 12.30 Sesame Street (720606). 1.00 Planed Plan: Rhy's a Tom's Yanc (489648). 1.30 Killing of an Egg (584347). 4.00 The Italian Kitchen (534505). 4.30 Montel Williams (581254). 5.00 Planed Plan (580470). 5.30 Countdown (1132588). 6.00 Newydd (582605). 6.30 Hero (5863505). 7.00 Pabot Y Cwm (33327078). 7.25 Y Cwm Rhyll (577401). 8.00 Cwm Rhyll (583654). 8.30 Newydd (585578). 9.00 Pabot a1 Ram (212673). 10.00 Brookside (5873944). 10.35 Friends (442682). 11.05 Eurotrash (586673). 11.35 Harry Hill (7520383). 12.05 17 Friday (577605). 1.00 17 Saturday (577605). 1.30 The Divine David Presents (3270425). 4.55 Close.



MATTHEW SWEET

TELEVISION REVIEW

THE WASHINGTON based is the widow of the poet. That was the moral of Personal Services: Brief Encounters (C), a cozy portrait of a South Shields laundrette which goes by the fairly absurd name of Posh Wash. David Lead's film was docu-soap of a very ill-lit kind, and as with the rest of the genre, it introduced us to a small group of strongly defined characters. There was Sandra Bennett, the owner-manager, who learned on an idle wash and breathed "This is my beautiful laundrette. Can you not feel the serenity?" There was Irondale, a woman of very few words, who - as her nickname implied - spent most of the day hidden in a mist of steam, steaming, and finally - and most - telegraphically - there was Old Betty, a fearsome old customer, Posh Wash was first saw giving a bunch of monthly schoolboys the verbal equivalent of a clip round the ear.

It was clear that Old Betty's curmudgeonly behaviour had caused problems in the past. In a voiceover, Sandra confessed that she'd once thought that her colleagues were "a bit of a bunch". At which point she cut to a shot of Betty staring into her teacup, as if attempting to turn the milk sour. Magnificently ill-tempered and deliciously down-in-the-mouth, Old Betty's dim view of crumpled clothing and unmanageable stains had the exasperating zeal of Victorian Calvinism. "Dirty bedding," she seethed, with a gloving look which could have felled a bull mastiff at 30 paces. "Stinking rotten. Some people are dirty. No need for it neither, because there's plenty of soap and water."

The other Posh Wash ladies also revealed themselves as been participants in the theory that the contents of a man's washing is a sure index of his moral rectitude. "I'll tell you about it, they'd probably tell me it was the dog," reflected Sandra, marshalling an arsenal of crassly whistles into the urn. "Males of that what you will." Fortunately, Ms Bennett and her two Bettes also took pride in the fact that they were as familiar with the personal lives of their clients as they were with their less savoury intimacies. Some of this intimacy was the result of the warm welcome which they

gave to their regulars. For instance, they clearly adored Jimmy the bus driver who came to Posh Wash more to pour out his troubles than to have his shirts pressed. Sandra approved of the virtue manifested in Jimmy's insistence on having his whites and colours washed separately, and Jimmy showed his appreciation by giving her a friendly text which he drove by in his double decker.

The ladies were also very handy with their wits. Sandra, for instance, had come to offer an important emotional support. Since the death of her husband, the weekly wash had become the only event in her social diary. She even spent her birthday on the premises, turning up in a cab and cracking open a bottle of sweet berry as the ladies lavished her drawers. For these customers, Posh Wash was a social and spiritual service - a cross between a drop-in centre and the waiting room from Sartre's *Flies* idea.

However, it soon became clear that the ladies' close relationships with their clients also owed quite a lot to their incredible patience. Among public people's dirty linen in the past, there were a large number of dirty secrets. In the past, they were a large number of dirty secrets. In the past, they were a large number of dirty secrets.

However, it soon became clear that the ladies' close relationships with their clients also owed quite a lot to their incredible patience. Among public people's dirty linen in the past, there were a large number of dirty secrets. In the past, they were a large number of dirty secrets.

However, it soon became clear that the ladies' close relationships with their clients also owed quite a lot to their incredible patience. Among public people's dirty linen in the past, there were a large number of dirty secrets. In the past, they were a large number of dirty secrets.

FRIDAY TELEVISION

BBC1

- 6.00 Business Breakfast** (59709). **7.00 News** (12673). **8.00 Killy** (S) (622844). **9.40 Style Challenge** (S) (708288). **10.00 City Hospital** (S) (708473). **10.55 News: Regional News** (S) (708473). **11.00 Good Living** (S) (450823). **11.25 Can't Cook, Won't Cook** (S) (450823). **11.45 News: Regional News** (S) (708473). **12.00 Pass the Buck** (S) (708473). **12.25 Going for a Song** (S) (708473). **12.50 The Weather Show** (S) (708473). **1.00 News: Weather** (S) (708473). **1.30 Regional News and Weather** (S) (708473). **1.40 News: Weather** (S) (708473). **2.05 Inside the (S) (708473). 2.35 Betwixt Dogs** (S) (708473). **3.45 Children's BBC: Playdays** (S) (623023). **3.45 Benetton** (S) (62054). **3.50 The All New Poppy Show** (S) (62054). **3.55 Dear Mr. Barker** (S) (62054). **4.00 As You Were** (S) (62054). **4.35 Record Breakers** (S) (62054). **5.00 Newsround** (S) (62054). **5.30 Blue Peter** (S) (62054). **5.55 Neighbours** (S) (62054). **6.00 News: Weather** (S) (62054). **6.05 Regional News** (S) (62054). **6.57 Weekend Watchdog** (S) (62054). **7.00 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **7.30 Top of the Pops** (S) (62054). **8.00 Keeping Up Appearances** (S) (62054). **8.30 In Extreme Danger** (S) (62054). **8.50 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **9.30 The Indecent Proposal** (S) (62054). **10.00 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **10.30 The Stand-Up Show** (S) (62054). **11.00 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **11.30 The Stand-Up Show** (S) (62054). **11.50 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **12.00 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **12.30 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **12.50 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **1.00 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **1.30 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **1.40 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **1.50 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **2.00 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **2.30 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **2.50 News: Regional News** (S) (62054). **3.00 News: Regional 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